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GAMEFAN

NEXT GENERATION VIDEO GAME MAGAZINE

VOLUME 4 • ISSUE 3

THE EXPLOSIVE SEQUEL!



TOSHINDEN 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

EXCLUSIVE!
TREASURE'S AMAZING
GUARDIAN
HEROES

PLUS:
RESIDENT EVIL
DIE HARD TRILOGY
SF ALPHA SATURN
KILEAK THE
BLOOD 2
JOHNNY
BAZOOKATONE
TALES OF
PHANTASIA
MEGAMI TENSEI
D&D - SHADOW
OVER MYSTARA
DESCENT
X-MEN
Y'S V



**GUARDIAN
HEROES**

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SOUL EDGE

namco



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Diddy's back and better than ever.

Fasten your seat belt.

This **monkey's** coming full throttle. Donkey




Torrential rain, bloodthirsty pirates, and now your ship is sinking...have a nice day.



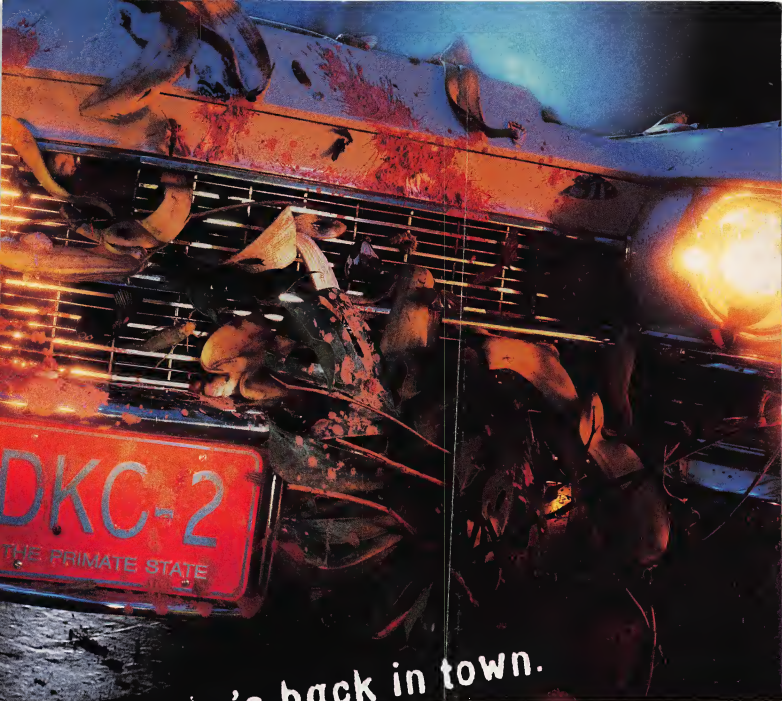
Dixie twirls her ponytail to fly chopper style—talk about a buzz cut!

Kong Country 2™: Diddy's Kong Quest™. Sleek, stylish and fully loaded. With

ACM graphics, 32 megs and so many **new levels**, it even outperforms last year's

model. But don't take our  word for it. Let Diddy take you once around the

park—sunken pirate ships, roller coasters, beehives. (Watch the **sticky stuff!**)



Guess who's back in town.

Or take his new pal Dixie for a spin—literally. This chimpette flies! There are other special moves too, like the **Buddy Toss** (please kids, don't try this at home). We even threw in a bunch of multiple endings. But hey, what do you expect from the **biggest evolution** in history. Except another game that leaves everything else far behind. (Ever been behind a



Look alive! There's more hidden stuff than ever.



Now there are smarter Kremlings out to slap your monkey around. Ouch!

monkey? It ain't pretty.)

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Namco's incredible 3-D polygon fighter that, believe it or not, you'll one day play at home!

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GameFan's exclusive first look at this spring's hottest Saturn title.

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STORY

The ultimate
3-D polygon
fighter?
You be the
judge.



RESIDENT EVIL

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GAMEFAN
character art by:



TERRY WOLFINGER

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Includes title track featuring
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You're the hottest thing in Rock'n Roll, and somebody just stole your favorite guitar.
It was the devilish Mr. Diablo - resident hard-case in Hades, and he's not about to give it up. He wants to play hard-ball?
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check out Johnny's website! <http://www.anime.net/~johnnyb>

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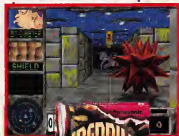
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TOP TEN MOST WANTED

READERS' TOP TEN

1. Virtua Fighter 2 - Saturn
2. Diddy's Kong Quest - SNES
3. Street Fighter Alpha - Arcade
4. Chrono Trigger - SNES
5. MK3 - PS
6. Tekken - PS
7. Killer Instinct - SNES
8. Doom - PS
9. Sega Rally - Saturn
10. Warhawk - PS



READERS' MOST WANTED

1. Killer Instinct II - U64
2. Tekken 2 - PS
3. Toshinden 2 - PS
4. Final Fantasy VII - U64
5. Resident Evil - PS
6. Soul Edge - PS
7. Ultimate MK3 - Any
8. Secret of Mana 2 - SNES
9. Super Mario RPG - SNES
10. Super Mario⁶⁴ - U64



DEVELOPERS' TOP TEN

This Month's Guest Developer(s)
Neversoft
(Developers of *Skeleton Warriors*)

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Doom 2 - PC (Network) | 6. Super Mario World - SNES |
| 2. Virtua Fighter 2 - Saturn | 7. Bionic Commando - NES |
| 3. SF2CE - Arcade | 8. Bomberman '94 - TG16 |
| 4. Daytona USA - Arcade | 9. Bust A Move - Arcade |
| 5. Karate Champ - Arcade | 10. Defender - Arcade |

GF EDITORS' TOP TEN

1. Guardian Heroes - Saturn
2. Mario RPG - SF
3. Panzer Dragoon Zwei - Saturn
4. Ray Earth - Saturn
5. Skeleton Warriors - Saturn



6. Zenki - PCFX
7. Floating Runner - PS
8. Darius Gaiden - Saturn
9. Resident Evil - PS
10. Vampire Hunter - Saturn

1. Resident Evil - PS
2. SF Alpha - PS
3. Soul Edge - Arcade
4. Guardian Heroes - Saturn
5. Virtua Fighter 2 - Saturn



6. Doom - PS
7. Tekken 2 - Arcade
8. Samurai Shodown 3 - Neo Geo
9. Rendering Rangers - SF
10. Robo Pit - PS

1. Killer Instinct 2 - Arcade
2. SF Alpha - Saturn/PS
3. Resident Evil - PS
4. DKC2 - SNES
5. Super Mario⁶⁴ - U64



6. Soul Edge - PS
7. Super Mario RPG - SNES
8. Darkstalkers - PS
9. Wave Race⁶⁴ - U64
10. Pilotwings⁶⁴ - U64

1. Resident Evil - PS
2. Panzer Dragoon Zwei - Saturn
3. Guardian Heroes - Saturn
4. Soul Edge - Arcade
5. Samurai Shodown 3 - Neo Geo



6. Skeleton Warriors - Saturn
7. Darius Gaiden - Saturn
8. D's - PS
9. D's Directors Cut - 3DO
10. Tales of Phantasia - SF

1. Super Mario⁶⁴ - U64
2. Killer Instinct 2 - Arcade
3. SF Alpha - Saturn
4. Soul Edge - Arcade
5. Super Mario RPG - SF



6. Pilotwings⁶⁴ - U64
7. Alien Trilogy - PS
8. Wave Race⁶⁴ - U64
9. Super Mario Kart R - U64
10. Shadows of the Empire - U64

1. Resident Evil - PS
2. SF Alpha - PS
3. Tales of Phantasia - SF
4. Toshinden 2 - PS
5. Virtua Fighter 2 - Saturn



6. D's - PS
7. Warhawk - PS
8. Tactics Ogre - SF
9. Kileak the Blood 2 - PS
10. Guardian Heroes - Saturn

WIN THE GAME SYSTEM OF YOUR CHOICE! ENTER TODAY!

All you have to do to enter the drawing is write down a list of your top 10 favorite games and the 10 games you want the most that aren't out yet, on a piece of paper or a postcard then send them to: GAME FAN TOP TEN, 5137 Claretton Dr., Suite 210 Agoura Hills, CA 91301

First Prize:
Your choice of a 32X,
VIRTUAL BOY, or NOMAD.

Second Prize:
Your choice of one of the Picks
of the Month in Viewpoint.

Third Prize:
A FREE year of Diehard Game Fan!
The best magazine in the Universe!

Drawing is limited to One (1) entry per person per month. Drawings will be held on the 21st of each month. The three (3) winners will be notified by mail and listed on this page. For a complete list of rules and regulations write GameFan Top Ten with self addressed & stamped envelope.

Congratulations

to last month's winners:
First Prize:
Vinicio Carrillo, Westminster, CO
Second Prize:
Nigel Bell, Bronx, NY
Third Prize:
Ron Gielarowski, Pittsburgh, PA

Right about now you
may want to press
the pray button.

OR YOUR EJECTION SEAT

Strap into ThunderStrike 2. True 3-D environments. 37 incredibly realistic missions in real-time, first person perspective, that reflect today's world conflicts. Rotate your viewing position 180 degrees. Your control panels and multi function monitors light up just like a real gunrunning in South America
Seas, it's in your face.

THUNDER
STRIKE

battle copter. Whether it's
or piracy on the South China
So go ahead, start praying.



Fluid cinematic animation makes
ThunderStrike 2 feel more like a movie
than a game.



Monitor combat situations outside your
copter in 360 rotation.



Prioritize targets, engage radar, activate
weapons and hold on.



U.S. GOLD





Travel With Thy Controller In
Hand To A Land Where
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Second Prize
Win a
GameFan T-Shirt,
and a one year
subscription to
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Third Prize
Win a
GameFan
T-Shirt

Send in your codes... good, bad, or
ugly. We'll look em' over and choose
one grand prize winner each month.
Codes cannot come from a previously
published US magazine. Winners
will be drawn each month and dis-
played here in Hocus Pocus, the only
place where cheaters prosper.
(Current subscribers who win a sub.
will receive a one year extension.)

* Any video game featured in our "Viewpoint" section.

CONGRATULATIONS!

To this month's winners:

First Prize:

Byron Nagakawa, Oakland, CA

Second Prize:

Jeff Guerrero, San Francisco, CA

Third Prize:

Stephen Mizet, Belton, MO

SEND YOUR CARDS AND LETTERS TO:
Hocus Pocus

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DOOM - PSX

GOD MODE

At any point in the game
press the start button to
pause, then press down, L2,
square, R1, right, left, L1,
left, circle. A message at the
bottom of the screen will fol-
low.

J. Greg Evans
Salt Lake City, UT



DOOM - PSX

CLUB DOOM AND CLUB DOOM 2

At the password screen enter:

Club Doom: JCGDNEFL556

Club Doom #2: 7L3I266DJK

Addison Yip
San Francisco, CA

DOOM - PSX

HIDDEN LEVELS

At the password screen enter:

The Mansion: NOCL1P1N22

The Marshes: THYFL3S2YY

The Military Base:

NOCL1P1N21

Christopher Rotondo
Brooklyn, NY

LOADED - PSX

HIDDEN ROOM

Use the Blue Card in the door
next to the 2nd level exit.
Enter the room and turn to the
left to access a hidden room
Robert Welsh
Tucson, AZ

LOADED - PSX

GOD MODE

At the start of the second
level, press and hold L1 then
simultaneously push X, O,
and start 5 times.
Heath Kristenson
Tucson, AZ

FATAL FURY 3 - NEO GEO CD

PLAY AS THE BOSSES

Finish the game choosing any
level and save the finished
game. Reset the machine,
and load the saved data, then
choose "New Game." At the
character select screen,
move to the characters in this
order, pressing B before mov-
ing to the next one:

Terry Bogard
Mai Shiranui
Bob Wilson

Andy Bogard

Joe Higashi

Hon-Fu

Geese Howard

Mochizuki Sokaku

Franco Bash

Blue Mary

If done correctly, all 3 bosses
will appear on the character
select screen.

Turbo Mode - At the character
select screen, hold start and
select your character by
pressing A or D.

Patrick Hsu
Vancouver, B.C. Canada

MARIO TENNIS - VIRTUAL BOY

In the title screen press L, L,
R, L, R, select, and watch
what happens.

Gregory Graham
Arthur, IA

MK 3 - ARCADE

MORPH INTO SMOKE

Back, back, back, down, circle
while playing as Shang
Tsung
Jonathon Kuder
Tampa, FL

ULTIMATE MK 3 - ARCADE

PLAY AS ERMAC

The UKK code is 1-2-3-4-4-4-
4-3-2-1

ERMAC'S FATALITIES:

Telekinesis Death Slam: D-U-

D-D-D-block (sweep)

Johnny Cage Decap: RN-BLK-

RN-RN-HK (close)

Pit: RN-RN-RN-LK

ERMAC'S MOVES:

Telekinesis Slam: B-D-B-HK

Fireball: F-D-B-LP

Teleport: D-B-HP

Leon Robinson
Marlboro, MA

MARVEL SUPER HEROES

NO GEMS

In a two player vs. game,
select both characters and
hold down the player one and
player two buttons simultane-
ously until the match starts.
It should say "no gems" at
the bottom of the screen.
Reggie Burrows, Jr.
Lansdale, PA

RETURN FIRE - 300

INVCINCIBILITY

Highlight the unit you are
going to use press C, hold L-
shift, R-shift, B and C then
press and hold X. Hold all of
the buttons and press down
and A.

Matthew Laurence
Victoria, Australia

SAMURAI SHODOWN III -

NEO GEO (Home and Arcade)

BOSS CODE

In a 1P vs. 2P game, number
the characters on the select
screen as follows

1 2 3 4 5 6
7 8 9 10 11 12 (4 is
Shizamaru). Move from character
to character in the fol-
lowing order 4-3-2-1-7-8-9-3-
4-10-11-12-6-5-4 then press
start. When the timer reaches
3 seconds, press ABC to
pick Zankuroo.
Joseph Palanca
Cerritos, CA



SEGA RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

SATURN

GET THE LANCIA STRATOS

Place first in the rally to get
on the Bonus Track

"Lakeside, A Muddy Mess!"

Practice this rally. Place

first in the rally and the

bonus track to get the bonus
car.

Stephen Mizer

Belton, MO

WINNER 3rd Place

SPACE HULK - 300

CHEAT MODE SCREEN

On the mode select screen

spell ABRACADABRA

(D=DOWN and R=RIGHT).

You may now choose which

stage, no malfunctions in

your gun, invincibility, etc.

Mathew Tate

Cincinnati, OH

STREET FIGHTER ZERO - PSX

RYU AND KEN VS. BISON

Beat the game on level 5 and

play again. It should now say

"Dramatic Battle"

Byron Nakagawa

Oakland, CA

WINNER 1st Place



STREET FIGHTER ZERO - PSX

CHOOSE HIDDEN CHARACTERS
Dan: At the character select screen hold down L2, go down to the "?" and quickly press triangle, square, X, circle, triangle.

Vega (Bison): At the character select screen hold down L2, go down to the "?" and press left, left, down, down, left, down, down, square + triangle simultaneously.

Gouki (Akuma): At the character select screen hold L2 and go to the "?" press left, left, left, down, down, square + triangle simultaneously.

Jeff Guerrero
San Francisco, CA
WINNER 2nd Place



TEKKEN 2

SELECT ALEX OR ROGER
Hold the left and right kick buttons, insert coin and quickly hold start until the player number select screen comes up. Choose, release start (keep holding the other buttons) and press start again to get to the character select screen. To be Alex release the LK button and move the joystick up twice. For Roger, release the RK button and press up twice.

Jacky Fan
Richmond, BC Canada

TOSHINDEN 2 - PSX

EXTRA COLORS
Choose your character by highlighting the random select box and pressing either square or X. Hold down the select button to slow down the random select.

PLAY AS URANUS AND MASTER
Beat the game on level 4 then change the difficulty to 8 and go into the random select.
PLAY AS VERMILLION AND SHO SHINJO: Defeat the game on level 3 with Uranus and go to the random select.
Brad Hainline
Nixa, MO

TOY STORY - GENESIS

LEVEL SKIP
At the start screen press A, B, right, A, C, A, down, A, B,

right, A. If done correctly you will hear a laugh. To skip levels, press start then A at the start of each level.
INVINCIBILITY
In the Red Alert Level collect 7 stars, then jump into the toy box. Hold down for 5 seconds. The star in the top left corner will spin if done correctly.
James Goodman
Casselberry, FL

TOY STORY - SNES

LEVEL SKIP
In Andy's room stand on the Army men bucket and hold down for 4 seconds. To skip levels press start then select (you must be invincible for the code to work).
INVINCIBILITY
Go to the chest in Andy's room with the Army men bucket. Stand on the bottom drawer and hold down for 5 seconds. The star in the upper left corner will spin if done correctly.
James Goodman
Casselberry, FL



TWISTED METAL PSX

Enter the following at the password screen
THE FIGHT OF YOUR LIFE
Square, triangle, circle, square, square
HELICOPTER VIEW CODE
Circle, circle, triangle, square, skip a space
INFINITE LIVES
Square, triangle, X, skip space, circle
INFINITE WEAPONS
Triangle, skip space, square, circle, circle
FIGHT MINION
Triangle, X, circle, square, triangle
Michael Climer
Beale AFB, CA



VIEWPOINT - PSX

LEVEL ACCESS CODES

Level	1-1	CGG
	1-2	CLL
	1-3	CRR
Level	2-1	FCF
	2-2	FHF
	2-3	FMK
Level	3-1	HCH
	3-2	HHC
	3-3	HMH
Level	4-1	KCK
	4-2	KKC
	4-3	KNG
	4-4	KTL
Level	5-1	MCM
	5-2	MHH
Level	6-1	PCP
	6-2	PHK
	6-3	PPC

Anthony Ernst
Tigard, OR

VIEWPOINT - PSX

SUPER CODE

While paused, enter: Sq, Sq, Cir, Cir, Tri, X, Sq, Up, Up, Down, Down, L1, R1, Select, for invincibility!

VIRTUA FIGHTER II - SATURN

BE DURAL
At the character select screen press down, up, right, A+left.
HIDDEN OPTIONS SCREEN
Beat the game on any difficulty setting. Return to options screen and press R twice.
Daniel Abramovici
Thornhill, Ontario, Canada

VIRTUA FIGHTER II - SATURN

CHANGE CLOTHING OF PLAYER
Highlight any player, press L, then A+up
NO SLOWNESS UNDERWATER
At title screen choose team at player mode. Keep it highlighted on Akira and enter the Dural code. Fight either Jeffrey or Wolf.
Caine Waiton
Indianapolis, IN

VIRTUA FIGHTER II - SATURN

HAWK'S CAMEO
At the Jackage stage press X, Y, and Z on both controllers simultaneously.
DURAL WITH NO METAL
Beat the game on hard
MUSIC OF VF1
Hold down L or R before music starts at any fight.
SLO-MO REPLAY
Before the replay hold A, B, and C

CHOOSE WINNING POSE

Hold down A, B, or C after a fight
Norihiro Otaki
Bonita, CA

VIRTUA FIGHTER II - SATURN

STAGE SELECT AND RING SIZE
At the start screen press up 12 times, then enter the options menu and press R twice. You should now have another menu
Graham Gibson
Oakland, CA

VIRTUA FIGHTER II - SATURN

CG INTROS
At the title screen press forward+A+B+C
Justin Epperson
Memphis TN

NFL GAMEDAY - PSX

EXTRA ABILITIES

At the options/password screen enter the following codes:
OFFENSE - increase offensive ability of team being controlled
DEFENSE - increase opposing team's difficulty
SKELETON - make players appear as skeletons
BIG BOYS - Players appropriately sized for their position
MAYHEM - increases number of injuries in the game
JUICE - increases speed of players
STICKUM - increases receivers' catching ability
PICK CITY - Increases the number of interceptions
CANNON ARM - Increases quarterbacks' abilities
CRUNCH TIME - makes the hits harder
STERIODS - increases the strength of players
URNOTREDE - toughest level of the game
Christian Navarrete
Richardson, TX



Legend
Graphics
Control
Play mechanics
Music
Originality



With the industrial tones of *Skinny Puppy* and *Type-O Negative*, impressive lighting effects, a link up feature, plus 5 new levels, there's plenty of cool original stuff in this PlayStation version of *Descent*. In fact, there was enough to make me start playing again. Just like *Doom*, I thought I was burned out on the computer version, only to have the PlayStation re-spark my interest. This is a great conversion of a great game, that's all that needs to be said.

G C P M O 85

In the slowly-changing world of PC games, *Descent* was considered to be one of the most ground-breaking games of all time... It was the first 360° 3-D game, which adds a huge amount of never-before-seen depth to the gameplay. I don't go for the searching-through-massive-mazes stuff that much; this one, however, is much more enjoyable than the myriad clunky *Doom* clones. If you're looking for a vast 3-D world to explore, or if you liked the PC version, *Descent*'s your game.

G C P M O 87

Most PlayStation games I've played recently haven't had any action power. Refreshingly, *Descent* has enough substance beneath the sheen to provide days, and not just, of PlayStation enjoyment. Besides the crazy lighting effects and awesome techno soundtrack, *Descent* has huge, huge levels, addictive gameplay and challenge galore. The 100% 3-D-ness of this game (and the unusual concept that harnesses it) take a while to get accustomed to, but once you get used to it, a fun time is yours for the taking.

G C P M O 83



When I first heard the PlayStation version of *Return Fire* was going to be enhanced, grand thoughts of new backgrounds and vehicles danced in my head. But with only adding a closer zoom perspective, and some nice new 3-D graphical effects, this version was not quite the improvement I was hoping for. It's still a great game with some of the best music and one of the most innovative (and addictive) two player modes around, but there's nothing here that shows off the PlayStation's power. I'll stick with my 3DO copy, thanks anyway...

G C P M O 75

Is it me, or is this game overrated? I feel none of the platoon my associate came to when playing *Return Fire*. Indeed, the music is novel, and admittedly, zoomin' about laying waste to level after level of pretty much the same thing can be somewhat gratifying. But *RF* is just too repetitious. Once the novelty wears off, you're left with a visually tiresome, clumsy shooter. It anything, the two player mode is the only reason I'd ever go back more than once.

G C P M O 70

It's fun your looking for, *Return Fire*'s got you covered. From beginning to end *RF* is a blast to play, particularly in the 2 player mode. You would not believe how ruthlessly evil you become and how hard you'll laugh as you try to blast your buddy to smithereens. And to top it off, *RF* has some of the best game music (well, sort of) of all time. Most I've used tonight, to check in this game. In fact, this whole game doesn't take itself seriously and that's its main appeal. Games like this don't grow on trees, so grab it while you can.

G C P M O 87



I can easily say *Resident Evil* is one of the best video game playing experiences of my life. It's like *Capcom* took everything I loved about *Alone in the Dark* (camera angles, horror undertones, item/puzzle gameplay), and supercharged it with outstanding graphics, a super deep storyline, and tons of carnage. I couldn't stop playing once the storyline grabbed me (that took about 1 minute), and I threw into the game my excitement hasn't even began to fade...

G C P M O 97

I've been waiting my entire life for this game... I've seen pieces of it before... the puzzle elements are reminiscent of *Indiana Jones* games, the play mechanics are similar to *Delphine's Illies*, and the theme takes me back to *D's* and *7th Gears*... But this is the first time all these elements came together to make a truly excellent game. This is going to be one of those games that define a system, and isn't forgotten, like *Actraiser* or *Ghouls and Ghosts*. Make it into a series, *Capcom*, please! (But lose Barry)

G C P M O 98

I am truly speechless. In all honesty, this is *Capcom*'s best game since *Street Fighter II*. Though not wholly original like the aforementioned *Alone in the Dark*, *Resident Evil* has taken the best aspects of a number of games such as *D's* and the *Alone in the Dark* series and melded them with Japanese joy (and some slightly painful voice acting) to create the ultimate "don't-play-it-by-yourself" game. My only gripe is the incredibly unfair save system, but I'll deal with it to play the best original 32-bit game so far.

G C P M O 99



Johnny Bazookatone is a very cool game. What seems like a basic platformer at first has much bigger aspirations, as you'll find some pretty deep gameplay here. Add to that excellent rendered graphics and some inspired tunes and you've got yourself... surprise!! A 2-D platformer on a next-gen system worth owning. I still need more.

G C P M O 85

This is a pretty cool title, and it's always good to see another 2-D game, especially on the PlayStation. I liked the puzzle-ish aspects - the first time that is. But after that, they became sort of tedious. The music's good, but got on my nerves after a while. Bottom line: good game, especially if you like category, which I normally do not.

G C P M O 80

I would have preferred a more happenin' rock star (a purple pompador?) but otherwise I found JB quite enjoyable. JB took a while to get the feel for, but once I configured the buttons right and got into it I found this a well thought out and unique adventure with great visuals, cool CG, and brain twisting levels. I think a sequel is in order.

G C P M O 85



What we've got here is *EWJ2* with arranged music, new backgrounds with crazy parallax, some cool lighting, and new surf'n' cows... great! Especially if you've never played it before! This is the only way to go for your first time *Jim*'ers. The only drag is they took out the line scrolls in *Puppy Love*. While I do beg for a true 32-bit *Jim*, I'll be lovin' this one for the time being.

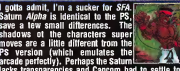
G C P M O 80

I don't know from *Screaming Pink* (great game guys) but they've done a great job landing *EWJ2* on the Saturn. The new backgrounds, like the BIG Jim statue with the cow on his shoulder, are the coolest, as are the new FX in *Lorenzo's Soil*. There's much joy here. While the game has remained pretty much the same, I feel the Saturn version is superior enough to take the plunge more than once. Hey, we got new cows here! And Elvis!

G C P M O 90

The Saturn version of *EWJ2* is the best *Jim* yet, but is it enough? *Jim 2* graphics have been given a subtle boost with additional scrolls in the background, increased color and more animation, but the programmers couldn't talent the graphics much further. The control and gameplay is classic *Jim*, in other words, beautiful. They also stepped up the difficulty a tad, so only true *Jim*'ers need apply here. Overall, the game is fab, but again, I wish the programmers had pushed the Saturn's graphic envelope a bit further with *Jim 2*.

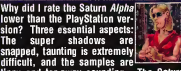
G C P M O 80



gotta admit, I'm a sucker for SFA. Saturn Alpha is identical to the PS, save a few small differences. The shadows of the characters super men are a little different than the PS version (which emulates the arcade perfectly). Perhaps the Saturn lacks transparencies and Capcom had to settle for less than perfect shadows, but the sound separation of the tunes and samples sound slightly thin and busted. The painful loading time has been cut down, however, and the great 3D controller only accentuates your enjoyment of this pretty game. Not perfect, but still amazing nonetheless. Alpha rules!

G C P M O 98

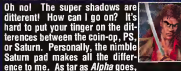
9 10 10 9 10 9



Why did I rate the Saturn Alpha lower than the PlayStation version? Three essential aspects: The super shadows are snapped, taunting is extremely difficult, and the samples are thin and far-away sounding. The Saturn version loads faster than the PS, but the purist like myself must have arcade exactness. Still, it plays the same (it not better with a Saturn pad and/or, well... It's Alpha.

G C P M O 95

9 10 10 10 7 9



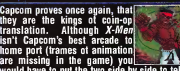
Oh no! The super shadows are different! How can I go on? It's hard to put your finger on the differences between the coin-op, PS, or Saturn. Personally, the nimble Saturn pad makes all the difference to me. As for as Alpha goes, well, my favorite characters, (Honda and Cammy) are gone, and visually there's not much new here. Of course all SF's play perfectly, but I'm looking for *SFIII* to re-kindle my fighting spirit.

G C P M O 90

9 10 10 9 9 9



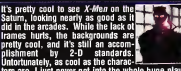
SF ALPHA SATURN CAPCOM™ CD FIGHTING



Capcom proves once again, that they are the kings of coin-op translation. Although *X-Men* isn't Capcom's best arcade to home port (frames of animation are missing in the game) you would have put the blame to tell the difference. The gameplay is perfect, the control is spot-on and the sound is... well, it IS the arcade sound. Whether you're a fan of the arcade game or just enjoy good lighting games, *X-Men* is for you. "Great game."

G C P M O 84

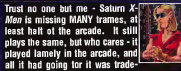
8 9 10 10 7 8



It's pretty cool to see *X-Men* on the Saturn, looking nearly as good as it did in the arcades. While the lack of frames hurts, the backgrounds are pretty cool, and it's still an awesome platform with 2-D standards. Unfortunately, as cool as the characters are, I just never got into the whole huge playing field/zillion hit combo/ultra low damage thing. Still, I'm encouraged by Capcom's graphical success and looking forward to *Night Warriors*. An idea Capcoms when you do *Marvel Super Heroes*, let the player choose between better animation and better backgrounds.

G C P M O 84

8 9 10 10 7 8



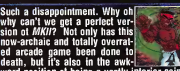
Trust no one but me - Saturn *X-Men* is missing MANY frames, at least half of the arcade. It still plays the same, but who cares - it played lame in the arcade, and all it had going for it was trademark Capcom visual force. If you're a maniac *X-Men* fan you'll be disappointed, but if you haven't played the arcade game, you'll probably love it. CG systems just weren't meant for this game, I guess.

G C P M O 75

8 9 7 7 6 7



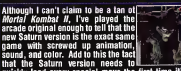
X-MEN SATURN ACCLAIM™ CD FIGHTING



Such a disappointment. Why oh why can't we get a perfect version of *MKII*? Not only has this now-archaic and totally overrated arcade game been done to death, but it's also in the awkward position of being a vastly inferior coin-op translation than the 5 month old PS *MK3*. Combos are missing, the load time sucks and, almost unbelievably, the music and sound effects don't come close to replicating the arcade game. Die, please.

G C P M O 55

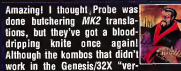
7 7 6 10 6 5



Although I can't claim to be a fan of *Mortal Kombat II*, I've played the arcade original enough to tell that the new Saturn version is the next best game with screwed up animation, sound, and color. Add to this the fact that the Saturn version needs to quickly load every special move the first time it's performed, and you'll end up with an unattractive, choppy mess that pales in comparison to the SNES version. In fact, this game wasn't that good in the first place, and Probe somehow made it even worse.

G C P M O 50

7 6 7 10 6 5



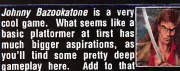
Amazing! I thought, Probe was done butchering *MK2* translations, but they've got a blood-dripping knife along that didn't work in the Genesis/32X "versions" are finally active, there are countless other problems. The main two are music and chunks. The music is brand new Probe crap (most of the voices are gone by the way), and the action is way too jerky.

G C P M O 33

6 6 6 2 5 7



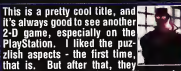
MORTAL KOMBAT 2 SATURN ACCLAIM™ CD FIGHTING



Johnny Bazoorkatone is a very cool game. What seems like a basic platformer at first has much bigger aspirations, as you'll find some pretty deep game play here. Add to that excellent sound effects and some inspired tunes and you've got yourself... surprise! A 2-D platformer on a next-gen system without editing. I still need more. Re: the Saturn game... This one just *feels* better.

G C P M O 87

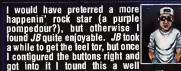
9 10 10 10 9 9



This is a pretty cool title, and it's always good to see another 2-D game, especially on the PlayStation. I liked the puzzle aspects - the first time that is. But after that, they become sort of tedious. The music's good, but got on my nerves after a while. Bottom line: good game, especially if you like the category, which I normally do not. The PS version scores a touch higher.

G C P M O 79

9 10 10 10 7 9



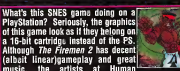
I would have preferred a more happenin' rock star (a purple pompadour, but otherwise I found *JB* quite enjoyable. *JB* took a while to get the feel for, but once I configured the buttons right and got into it I found this a well thought out and unique adventure with great visuals, cool CG, and brain twisting levels. I think a sequel is in order. Hey, *deja vu*! I liked the PS version just a bit more. The CG's cleaner and there's more sound FX.

G C P M O 82

9 10 10 10 7 9



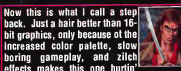
JOHNNY BAZOOKATONE SATURN US GOLD™ CD ACTION ADVENTURE



What's this SNES game doing on a PlayStation? Seriously, the graphics of this game are so far behind on a 16-bit cartridge, instead of the PS. Although *The Firemen 2* was decent (albeit linear gameplay and great music, the artists of *Human* should spend some time bringing the visuals up to 32-bit standards. It's really too bad because *TF2* is actually a good game (don't laugh, I liked part one as well), and that should be enough to carry the game, but it's hard to get passed the stone-age visuals. *TF2* is addictive and archaic all at once.

G C P M O 66

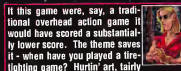
4 6 7 8 10 9



Now this is what I call a step back. Just a hair better than 16-bit graphics, only because of the increased color palette, slow boring gameplay, and zilch effects makes this one hard to rate for the PS. For some odd reason *Fireman* actually has good music, but 60 bones is a little steep for a soundtrack. Nope, sorry, the only tire you'll need to put out here is when I torch this turd.

G C P M O 45

4 4 8 8 6 10



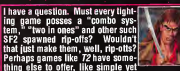
If this game were, say, a traditional overhead action game it would have scored a substantially lower score. The theme saves it - when have you played a fire-fighting game? Hurin' art, fairly interesting gameplay and a hyper-hokey storyline harm the game further, but the CD's worth buying for the music alone.... This is literally what I imagined a CD *Final Fantasy* to sound like.

G C P M O 70

6 7 7 10 9 7




THE FIREMEN 2 PLAYSTATION HUMAN™ CD ACTION



I have a question. Must every lighting game feature a "combo system" (two in ones and other such SF2 spawned rip-offs? Wouldn't that just make them, well, rip-offs? Perhaps games like *TF2* have something else to offer, like simple yet very fun lighting that anyone can enjoy. By the way, set on hard, it ain't that easy. Not everyone lives at an SF2 machine. I play all kinds of games and my opinion on *TF2* is that it does what it is meant to do just about as well as it can be done. It is, in a word, beautiful. Fun too.

G C P M O 90

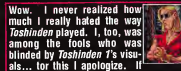
10 10 10 10 9 10



When *Toshinden* came out, it received a flurry of 10's, 100% 's, and "Best Game Ever" comments. But once that level of graphic quality became commonplace, I think every one finally realized what an awful game it really was. I was looking forward to *BAT2* to see if they managed to add some control to their graphics (I mean, they must have known...) but alas, they did not, and we have another *Toshinden* game with great graphics, awesome character design (Namron and Urasas are too cool) but no playability. Sorry, *Tekara*, but you don't get points for novelty anymore.

G C P M O 78

10 10 10 10 6 10



Wow, I never realized how much I really hated the way *Toshinden* played. I, too, was among the fools who was blinded by *Toshinden*'s visuals... for this I apologize. If you're not a twisted, snapped, and thoroughly ruined fighting game fan like myself, you probably won't give a damn about how it plays... 'cause does it ever look good.

G C P M O 78

10 10 10 10 6 10



TOSHINDEN 2 PLAYSTATION TAKARA™ CD FIGHTING



ROBO PIT
PLAYSTATION
ALTRON • CD
FIGHTING

What a cool little game! I don't like it as much as the powdered individual on the right, but *Robo Pit* is highly original and very fun. Building your own robot was a great idea... you never have to play *Robo Pit* the same way twice, and you can (and have to) change your robot often during your 100-rank climb to the top. Still, the coolest thing about *PR* as anyone will agree is the vast selection of rockin' eyes for your lil' robodude.

G C P M O 79

I was hooked on *Robo Pit* from the first moment I played. It's just too cool. I'm confused though, here we have a company who's done nothing over (that I can recall) in the gaming industry, and yet you've developed a wonderfully addictive shooter/light-strategy masterpiece that eclipses 90% percent of the games released by the "big" companies this year. Don't that seem wrong? In courses, with all small games of this type, the chances of it being released here are almost nil. But then again, that's what everyone thought about *Zero Divide*...

G C P M O 85

Wow, I didn't expect *Robo Pit* to be much more than a side-show, but as it turns out, I'm quite impressed. The depth of the gameplay especially stands out. This is one little where, if you like the action, you really get your money's worth. The lil' guys you can make will have you rolling, and the multiple viewpoint light scenarios are like a munchkin game of *Overthron*. I hope the Saturn version's as good.

G C P M O 85



HORNED OWL
PLAYSTATION
SCE • CD
SHOOTING

This is why gun shooters should never be released in the home—they're play-once arcade fodder. Why did SCE spend such sick amounts of cash on this game? They hired Masamune Shirov of *Applesseed* and *Ghost in the Shell* fame to do mech and character design and Movie, a well-known animation studio to do the cinematics. Where they forgot to spend their money was the programming team. Tedium is all you'll find here.

G C P M O 50

This game makes me wish that I had one of those TV-in-a-TV things so that I'd have something to do while I play. How could they take stunning backgrounds, original Masamune Shirov animation, and a cool plot, and turn it into the most boring gun game ever made? And what's with that music? "I'll just bring a tape recorder to little Yoko's piano recital!" Ugh. I've played through this game once, and I know I will never, ever, ever play it again.

G C P M O 52

There are plenty of positive things I could say about *Horned Owl*. It has a cool gun, and, um, er...

G C P M O 50



GUNBIRD
SATURN
ATLUS • CD
SHOOTING

When compared to a game like *Raiden*, *Gunbird* scores extremely high, with huge sprites, shattering backgrounds, moving targets, and excellent sound. When compared to games like *Darius*, *Gaiden* or *Phileas* however, *Gunbird* just can't hang. It's a late '80s style arcade shooter you want, they don't get much better. The art is great, and the ongoing story line is very cool. Question is, do you need it?

G C P M O 75

Wheel! Another port of a Japanese arcade shooter. Most cutesy Japanese arcade shooters of late are meant to be played once, and Psykyo's *Gunbird* is no exception. As much as I love 2-D shooters, it's time for them to grow beyond their 15-bitness and into next-gen splendor. If you're looking for a 2-D Saturn shooter, look no further than *Darius Gaiden*, and stay away from *Gunbird* unless you really need another shootin' fix.

G C P M O 70

I liked the overall look and feel of this game. *Gunbird* is one of those games that occupies the middle ground. It doesn't have any major flaws to speak of. The controls are perfect and graphics are well drawn. Trouble is, once you've beaten the game using all the characters, you won't want to touch it ever again. In other words, it's a forgettable game. *Gunbird* is challenging but for some impossible. If you like Japanese anime and enjoy shooters, then this might be a good diversion for you. Just don't expect anything more than that.

G C P M O 70



ZENKI-VAJURA FIGHT
PC-FX
HUDSON • CD
ACTION

Wow! A 2-D side-scroller on the FX! This is what we need more of. It isn't even a lame original character either... it's Zenki! Combine truly impressive, parallax-and-effect-laden side-scroll with diverse, fun play mechanics and you have Zenki: *Vajura Fight*. You can beat the game in a half-hour, though... too bad.

G C P M O 85

An action game on the FX? What a concept. Well, I like Zenki, I like Hudson, and I like traditional side-scrollers, so what's not to like here? It's a tad short, the intermissions blow, and they could have used more colors, but these are all forgivable offenses. Besides, if you have an FX, what else are you going to buy?

G C P M O 82

We-ho! Another FX game I can play! My favorite exotic toy, the blazin' little PCFX, gets its first action game. Were it three times as long, I'd be even happier. As it is, it is one cool 40 minutes of Zenki (a tab anime) style action. Big sprites, nice animation and even some rendered backgrounds prove the FX can do it. Now do it more! One good game a month, that's all I ask!

G C P M O 88



Y'S V
SUPER FAMICOM
FALCON • 24-MEG CART
ACTION/RPG

The gaming world has never harmed me more in my life. Falcon has done the most evil thing imaginable: taking a classic CD series of heaven and throwing it on a cheap, nasty 24-meg cart. Even more hell is Falcon's announcement that this is the LAST Y'S GAME! What? Taken as a stand-alone game, *Y's V* is OK, with humdrum play mechanics, effects and music. Farewell! Y's. You meant a lot to me, and I darsay you changed my life. Now it's truly over.

G C P M O 76

The developers of this game must be made to realize that they've done something terribly wrong. You don't just take an old CD series, tamed for its music and intermissions, and turn it into some uninspired Saturn adventure game! It's EVIL! How could you call out *Y's V*? But on the other hand, I have to acknowledge that this game is, by itself, and not compared to the rest of the series, pretty good. Really short, but still pretty good. I just can't stand the thought of those call-outs at Falcon netting your money.

G C P M O 79

Well, they've finally broken Y's. Not the way I thought they would with a rendered next-gen version, but right here on 16-bit. Super linear gameplay, idiotic bosses that barely move and a map about the size of Gilligan's Island make this a real tear jerker. To add insult to injury, the music totally sucks. It's an 8 hr. game with 2 good hours. Farewell.

G C P M O 55



TALES OF PHANTASIA
SUPER FAMICOM
NAMCO • 48-MEG CART
RPG

Beautiful graphics (perhaps the best the SF has ever seen) excellent tunage, a memorable spell effects and 16-megs of voice alone is fantastic but combine that with an annoying *Saiten* 3-ish "We think we're making you think you're actually interacting" battle system and a clichéd storyline and you have a majority flawed but still excellent game. The sad thing is that *Phantasia* could have been fixed in a few days.

G C P M O 82

This is one of those games that is good now, but would have been great if they had actually changed a few lines of code. How simple the programmers must believe us to be if they think that we'd be amused by fighting the same semi-interactive battle 120 times per hour... UGH! Still, we have some lovely music and the best SNES/Saturn graphics ever, so patient role-players should definitely give this one some thought. To those who release it here with 2/3 less battles, I'd give it a 95%.

G C P M O 86

Tales is the best RPG I've ever played in Japanese on the SF. I can't read the story but I'm pretty clear on the scenarios due to the excellent AI. The art is superbly detailed, the music near perfection (real singin'), and the fight scenes are totally original, and, excuse the lame word - interactive. I'm 30 hours in and lovin' it. Namco must find a way...

G C P M O 90



Neversoft's 3-D Art Director and Co-owner, Joby Otero was kind enough to answer some of our questions about his company and their first release, Saturn's *Skeleton Warriors*. We also got to take a first look at the upcoming PlayStation version, due out in April. (Although complete, the Saturn version has been pushed back until March, for the purpose of marketing them together). Unfortunately, Joby's "cranial implant" prevented him from directly answering any questions about what Neversoft has been working on in the meantime, but we managed to get a few clues...

GameFan: *To start with, where exactly did Neversoft come from, and how did you end up doing a *Skeleton Warriors* game?*

Joby Otero: *Skeleton Warriors* was our first game as Neversoft. [Neversoft] had gotten the contract to do a 16-bit version of *Skeleton Warriors*, primarily for the Genesis and later for the SNES. Basically, because of Dave [Lumin, of Playmates]'s insight into the future of the 16-bit market, the decision was made to look at other possibilities of bringing *Skeleton Warriors* to the market. We were all very enthusiastic about getting our hands dirty on the new 32-bit platforms... I had had a limited amount of experience working on the Saturn at a previous company with a game called *Blackfire*...

[At this point, the GameFan delegation was unable to suppress a rude snort... *Blackfire* was never one of our favorites]

A very limited amount of experience I would say [laughs]. I'd seen enough of the Saturn to see that it was a very exciting piece of hardware, Especially in comparison to the limitations on the Genesis and SNES. So when Playmates said "Well, we might be interested in doing *Skeleton Warriors* 32-bit," we were all over that.

Developer's Spotlight:

NEVERSOFT

We went down to Neversoft's Woodland Hills headquarters to find out how these 13 men, 2 women, and 1 Samoyan could produce one of the year's best action adventure title with their very first release.

GF: *So that's why you decided to do it on Saturn instead of PlayStation?*

JO: "Well, ah, there were a couple of reasons, I think primarily the Saturn version was just more accessible at that time, and they also seemed to be closer to market. And if we take that a couple of months down the road, I think it's pretty fair to say that at the time it seemed like the Saturn seemed

like a better platform to do this particular type of game on...

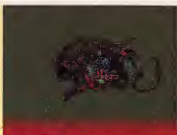
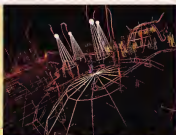
As you can see, we did a really good job of implementing pretty much 100% that same game on the PlayStation, but certainly at the time the perception was that the Saturn was better suited for this kind of game. I think it's pretty fair to say that both of those platforms... Some of the developers out there are utilizing the Sony almost exclusively for their 3-D first person kind of stuff, and the Saturn for the kind of stuff that we're doing. But really, if you look at the really stand-out stuff for any genre, the best on either platform are pretty comparable... Look what Scavenger's done with *Amok*, or *Scorchers*. They're easily the same calibre of 3-D as anything on the PlayStation. So all this commentary that's getting into the press about one platform being the de facto console for any particular kind of genre... It's pretty premature to be saying that.

GF: *What about now for the newer systems like the M2 or Ultra-64?*

JO: We're keeping an eye on that, and we're also thinking about getting into the PC market. It really depends on the state of the market saturation of the 3-D hardware acceleration on the PC platform in the next year. We're pretty interested in doing some network based games... There are a hell of a lot more PCs out there than Saturns and PlayStations. But the things we want to do are pretty much dependant on the level of 3-D hardware acceleration.

GF: *How long have you been working on the *Skeleton Warriors**





The original wire-frames for the animation in *Skeleton Warriors*. Can you believe they did most of this on a Pentium!?

project?

JO: The first time that Neversoft came in contact with the licensee was about a year and a half ago. We worked up until about late November under the idea that we'd be doing a 16-bit platform game. It was about mid-December '94 when we got the go ahead to do the 32-bit version, but it wasn't until March when we got the actual development hardware.

GF: Did you feel you were hindered by having to work within the limitations of a license?

JO: Basically it was only the first two months or so we were working on the project that we really felt hindered by the fact that we

were working on a license. And it was really a self-imposed fear of stepping across the border of what Landmark felt was an appropriate use of their characters. But it was only until we had actually made our first submittal of artwork and the initial 3-D models of Landmark's characters that we felt that way... After they had seen it and we got their initial feedback, we realized that they were going to be very easy to work with and pretty enthusiastic about the minor changes we had made in their lead characters. And in fact, in one instance I went so far as to completely redesign the narrator character that appeared at the beginning cartoon and they really gave nothing but very enthusiastic feedback about it.

So from that point forward it was a very enjoyable relationship between Landmark, Playmates, and ourselves. And we really began to break ourselves away from feeling any sort of fear in putting out own artistic slant on any of the characters. We did essentially begin to feel as though we weren't really working on a license anymore.

GF: So they had no problem with the dark atmosphere of the game?

JO: No, if anything they were encouraging of that.

GF: So there's nothing you wanted to slip past, but wasn't allowed in?

JO: No, I mean, I think we did a pretty good job of trying to put a little bit of gore in, and I think we felt that we should err on the side of being conservative, but when we heard feedback from them, we felt that there was really no cause for our concern.

GF: What was it like working with Tommy Tallarico on the soundtrack? Was the result what you expected?

JO: When he came in, I didn't know what to expect, basically. He has a very unassuming personality, so I had no idea what he was actually going to do with the music. Initially, what I wanted with the music was for it to be kind of pieced together, sort of a collage of different environmental sounds. Not like ambient music, but, for instance, if we had like water dripping in a cavernous background alluded to in the visuals, then there should be some kind of percussive sound like that, some drums have that kind of tone to them, they sort of sound like water dripping in the distance. Or the low hum of distant



Neversoft's 3-D Art Director, Co-Owner, and Four Guide, Joby Otero, with some of the amazing artwork he does during his time off. I wish we had space to show it all...





chanting, like Tibetan monks or something. I never got to hear any of it, but apparently he did some tests with music that was sort of along those veins, and it was really, I believe, Playmates' decision to go with something that was maybe a little more classical, and at the same time, aggressive...

GF: *Can't you tell us anything about your next project? Even just vague hints?*

JO: Well, um, everybody here is pretty enthusiastic about being able to take the basic structure of the game that *Skeleton Warriors* turned out to be, and embellish it with some of the things that we know we could have done better, if given more time, or more experience with the hardware. So we'd like to do something like that, I can't say for certain in the press whether we're actually going to do that.

We definitely want to be able to utilize our talent with geometry and textures and engines for real time 3-D first person perspective type games as well. We have a concept that's been in the works since pretty early on in the *Skeleton Warriors* development that we'd like to bring to fruition, so that's one of several things that we're very enthusiastic about. If I had to rate the likelihood of something



So, just who are these people? No, they're not that group that broke off from Shiny (that's *Neverhill*, darn it!), and they're not fresh-faced newcomers either (with a few exceptions). The majority of the staff came from Malibu Interactive, and individual members also hail from Argonaut, Clockwork Tortoise, and Novologic. They are:

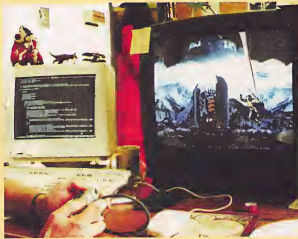
Top row: Daniel Morgan Beenfeld (Programmer), Kendall Harrison (Programmer), Michael West (Technical Director/Owner), Mark Wilson (3-D Artist), Brenda Ross (3-D Artist), Natural Born Killer Dave Lumin (from Playmates), Jason Uyeda (Producer), Mike Day (Programmer), Joel Jewett (President/Owner), Christopher Ward (Art Director/Owner), Noel Hines (3-D Artist), Jun Jun Calvia (Producer)

Front row: Brian Schmitt (3-D Artist), Joby Otero (3-D Art Director/Owner), Allen Fernandez (Producer), Lisa Edmison (Special Projects Manager) As you can see, Neversoft adheres to a particularly strict dress code... The dog's name is Logan.

like that happening in the next two years, I'd probably put it at about 50/50... If I was rating it strictly on the basis of the quality of concept and our - to me - very obvious ability to carry it out, then I'd say it's 100%, but it's pretty hard to gauge where the market's going to go, and that and some pretty upper echelon business decisions are going to determine what's on the curriculum of publishers.

Thanks to everyone at Neversoft for all of their hospitality, and best of luck on the new project, we can't wait to see it!

PlayStation Version! Exclusive Special Preview



We also talked with Kendall Harrison, who's working hard on finishing up the PlayStation version of *Skeleton Warriors*.

GameFan: *I wanted to ask you about some of the changes you had to make to make the PlayStation version work.*

Kendall Harrison: Well, the Sega can do scrolling backgrounds in hardware, you just load them into memory and they appear on screen, it's just a couple of lines of code. And the Sony, all it can do really is draw sprites on the screen. It can do it very fast, but that basically means you have to emulate everything that the Saturn does using sprites. So the far backgrounds have to be done using blocks of sprites, and it turns out that it can't do it fast enough to get it within 60fps, so we have to do lots of tricks, like when the distant background isn't visible, it doesn't draw it at all, and we have a lot of messy tricks like that, to make it just draw exactly what appears on the screen, and that's what takes up a lot of processing power. And that's basically how it works, it's very messing programming, really.

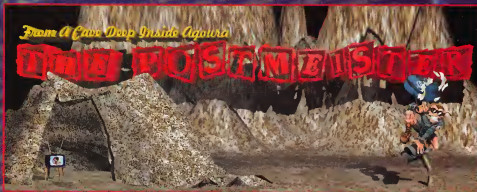
GF: *But you're confident you can get 100% the same results?*

KH: Yes, possibly the fog that moves across the screen might be slightly different, 'cause on the Sega that's just another bitmap which moves automatically, and doesn't take any processing power at all, but on the Sony it has to be done with sprites, and has to use up a lot of processing power... So basically everything which took zero processing time on the Sega will take up a good chunk of time on the Sony. But luckily the actual processor on the Sony is a lot faster. It's moving twice as fast as the Sega's processor. So that kind of equalizes out. It was quite a tight squeeze, and we had to do a lot of optimization.

GF: *How about the bike sequences, can those be done any easier on the PlayStation?*

KH: Possibly, on the Sega there's a lot of warping on the textures when they get closer on the screen, and that's because the Sega can't do Z-clipping very well, it can't give an arbitrary offset to the texture in memory. Whereas on the Sony it should be able to do that better. But then again, the rotating backgrounds on the skybike scenes will have to be emulated. But it should look more or less identical.

From what we've seen so far, it appears that Neversoft is well on their way to achieving their goal of a perfect *Skeleton Warriors* on PlayStation... Look for a review in the coming months!



Dear GameFan,

You already know this, I'm sure, but I got so excited about it I just had to tell somebody.

Remember back around the time Sega released *Dynamite Headdy*? You guys wrote a couple of articles on two upcoming Genesis titles that were described as "phenomenal" - *Flink* and *Tinhead*. Well, of course, *Flink* finally got a belated release thanks to Vic Tokai, but I totally gave up on ever seeing *Tinhead*. In fact, I'd even written to the company requesting that they release it, citing the GameFan article in the process. So... imagine my surprise when I walked into the Electronics Boutique yesterday and spotted a single copy of *Tinhead* for sale! And get this: it was only \$19.99. A "brand new" release for only \$20? Great!

Now, can you explain two things? Why did Crystal Dynamics wait over a year to release *Tinhead*? And why did they release it at \$20? By the way, *Tinhead* is everything you said it was and more! Like *E. Storm*, my favorite game genres are the action-platform titles (*Sonic*, *Mario*, *Sockey*, *Sparkster*, etc.) and RPG's. Why didn't you guys let us know that *Tinhead* was finally coming out?

R I P
Greensboro, NC

Because we didn't know, ourselves! This is insane, but the morning we got your letter, the staff was sitting around and chatting, and the topic of Tinhead came up... E. Storm was desperately trying to find out if it had been released in Europe so he could get a copy. Then we get your letter, and it truly made our day. The Postmeister and crew humbly thank you! We hope to be able to re-review Tinhead next issue, and get to the bottom of what exactly took so long.

Dear Postmeister,

Why are you guys rating preview versions of Saturn games? It started with *Dark Legend*, which has silky smooth animation, with not a hint of framiness, and great music. Now it's *VF2*. In my version, Shun Di has his sake and drinks it plenty. The characters' hair drift with the wind and react to the character's movements, and there is a cool effect in Dural's stage. Also, *Sega Rally* actually has 3 cars and 4 tracks. Other than the above problems,

your map is great. Keep up the good work.

Dave Wilcox
Westport, CT

Thanks for bringing this to our attention, Dave. Yours was not the only letter we received about Dark Legend, and we're going to look into it and re-review it next month if necessary. We never review preview games, but many times the copies that we're handed for review purposes are not 100% final versions even though they're clearly marked "review copy." Thanks to the quick production time for compact discs, games can undergo last minute tweaking mere days before they hit the stores, so even our "final" copies may not be 100% complete.

Dear Postmeister,

First off, I would like to compliment you guys on the great job you always do. I occasionally pick up "other" mags, but they usually only have a few good articles. GameFan, on the other hand, is like the ELVIS of gaming mags. You always spend a lot of space covering my favorite subjects - RPG's and the Japanese gaming scene. I have just subscribed to GameFan because your sideburns are so godly. Anyhow...

There are a few reasons for my writing, one of which is to say that I just sold my PlayStation to buy a Saturn. Sony of America doesn't seem to recognize that not everyone in the world wants to play 3-D polygon games. I purchased the PlayStation to play *Arc the Lad*, which I bought on import. But one RPG (no matter how omnipotent) just doesn't cut it! After considering the great games (*Albert Odyssey Golden*, *Golden Axe: The Duel*, *Pretty Fighter X*, and *Guardian Heroes*) that are coming out only for the Saturn, along with the news of the Sega-SNK cross-licensing deal, I decided to dump my PlayStation for a system with a better variety of games.

Now, on to *Samurai Shodown 3*. I stumbled across this incredible game in the arcades, and I was wondering why I haven't read about it in your mag?

Also, I have a few questions that you can answer if you want to:

1) Will *Samurai Shodown 3* and *Samurai Shodown RPG* be released on the Saturn soon?

2) Is it a joke? Or is *Dragon Warrior 5* finally coming out on SNES?
3) Is there a company or group of individuals capable of translating strategy guides for Japanese RPG's? Although I've played through *Arc the Lad*, *Final Fantasy 5*, *Romancing Saga 2*, and *Secret of Mana 3* without translations, it would have been nice to know what the townspeople were saying.
4) What is your projection for the next generation system with the best RPG outlook? (As of right now, in my opinion, Super Famicom is still king)

Thanks for your time. You guys rule!
Phil Neubauer
Slinger, WI

Wow, because of your lovely Elvis comments, I no longer have the heart to make childish cracks about the name of your city... But I do have bad news, and you should sit down, 'cause this is gonna hurt. Samurai Shodown III is a spectacular game, and it's coming out for the PlayStation you just sold. Yes, after inking the deal to license games to Sega, SNK turned around and became a Sony 3rd party company themselves. They're making King of Fighters '95, Samurai III, and Fatal Fury: Real Bout...

1) But there's still hope for a Saturn version, too. SNK and Sega did a readers' survey in a Japanese Saturn magazine, and the top 4 Neo games they wanted to see on the Saturn were, in order, *Samurai III*, the *Samurai RPG*, *Samurai II*, and *Samurai I*. Let's hope they get the hint.
2) *Dragon Quest V* will never come out here, but there's still a chance that Nintendo could release *Dragon Quest VI* here as *Dragon Warrior 5*.

3) Some mail order companies sell translations and walkthroughs with the games, or you can try to download FAQ's about them from the Internet.

4) The Saturn has a strong lead both in RPG releases and RPG's planned. The PlayStation only has a few, but a couple of high-profile titles like *Baldeselva* and *Arc the Lad 2* are coming up. The FX has some big RPG's coming too. Still only FFVII and the new DQ for the Ultra.

Dear Postmeister,

I must compliment your December magazine and especially the Anime section. I hope to see this more often. I have a few questions:

1) Since SNK is porting Neo-Geo games over to the Saturn, will any of these games come out: *Magician Lord*, *CrossSwords* and the *Samurai Shodown RPG*? Can you give me a list of SNK games coming to Saturn?
2) When is *Rigford Saga* coming to the US? Is the game any good?
3) I am disappointed with the Stunner for *Virtua Cop*. Why does Japan get a nice black gun while the Americans get stuck with an ugghh... orange gun?
4) When I heard *Dragon Ball Z* was coming to Saturday morning cartoons, I thought,

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"Wow, I don't have to buy bootleg movies anymore," but I was wrong, I was surprised to see the old series for little kids. Do we have to wait another 10 years to get to where Japan was recently? Or will we never have *Dragon Ball Z* come to the states? I'm sure a lot of *Dragon Ball* fans were disappointed.

5) In your last mag, someone wrote a letter saying how bad the cover art for *Toshinden* is for the American version, but the Japanese one isn't good either. It's a cover of nothingness.

6) Why is it that all 3-D fighters are polygon fighters? Can't they make a 3-D fighting game like *Virtua Fighter* with cartoon-like characters from *Street Fighter* or something like that? Didn't Sega make a 3-D fighter of *Dragon Ball Z* in Japan?

1) I doubt there's enough interest to warrant bringing over the older games, unfortunately. Here's the "list" for Saturn, as it stands: *King of Fighters '95*, and *Fatal Fury III*. Whew, hope you got all that! 2) It's out, it's retitled *Mystaria*, and it's pretty good.

3) It wasn't really their decision. After a rash of accidents involving fake guns, consumer pressure on toy stores made them stop selling realistic-looking guns, hence the fruit colors on all video game guns sold in America. Remember the *SuperScope* and *Justifier*?

4) The producers wanted to show the whole series in order, so they condensed and cut the original *Dragon Ball* series so that they could get the DBZ episodes sooner. Let's hope it doesn't get cancelled first...

5) Actually, they re-released *Toshinden* in Japan 7 or 8 months ago, with nice anime cover art.

6) Well, obviously any 3-D game is going to have to involve polygons, but there's no reason they have to aim for realistic looking characters. We'll see how Bandai's 3-D *Dragon Ball* games coming for *PlayStation* and *Saturn* look in a few months.

Dear Postmeister,

Being the greatest game mag there is, I'm sure you guys can answer these questions:

1) In another game magazine, there was an article on *Squaresoft* and *Enix* explaining that they've decided to quit releasing games to the US because of low software sales. Could this be true? The two RPG giants of the world just leaving US RPG players stuck in the mud? If it is true, I think both of them need to really rethink their pitiful plan. They both don't know how much American really loves their incredible games.

2) Is there an exact date on when *NU64* is supposed to come out? April 1996 is really not enough information, Nintendo!

3) Do you think 32X is dying?

4) Jaguar?

5) Is CD-I dead?

6) Finally, there was word for a while on an RPG for the 32X. Is it still going to be released? If it is, do you all have any info on it?

Thank you for your time,
Sean B. Kamp,
San Antonio, TX

1) We've had a lot of panicky letters about this, but gamers shouldn't worry. It's true that *Enix* and *Square* are slowing down in terms of translating SNES games, like many companies who are unsure of the future of 16-bit platforms. Hopefully they'll return to their full force when the *Ultra* comes out. In the meantime, however, *Nintendo* is licensing a lot of their games, including *Genesis* (*Creation of Heaven and Earth*) and *Tactics Ogre* (*Sequel to Ogre Battle*). Considering *Nintendo*'s history of timely and well done translations, this might actually be a good thing. So the growing revolutionary army of people who write and call *Square* constantly to get them to release *Secret of Mana 3* might want to turn their attention to *Nintendo*...

2) April 21st in Japan, not yet announced here.

3) Definitely.

4) (Bracing self for possibly violent negative reaction from the three psycho *Jaguar* owners who write me every day) Yes....

5) Totally.

6) *Shadows of Atlantis* and *Alone in the Dark 2* were both cancelled, perhaps you meant one of those? Other than that, we've heard nothing, and no one's working on new 32X titles anymore.

Dear Postmeister,

As a proud new *PlayStation* owner, I'm thoroughly enjoying watching *Sony* trounce *Sega*. I used to be a loyal *Sega* customer until something terrible happened. You see, this is hard for me to talk about, but I own a 32X. Figures I've seen indicate that there are 400,000 of us victims out there. That's a lot of PO'd gamers, many of whom will never buy another *Sega* product. *Sega* should offer a \$100 rebate on a *Saturn* to all 32X owners.

Anyway, color me *Sony* now on. They've done an incredible job, and the machine and the games rock. A few things are bothering me though.

1) *Sony* really shouldn't doctor the pictures in their ads. It's terribly obvious and very uncool.

2) The multiplayer setup is highly impractical, except in the offices of game magazines. *Sony* needs to make a modem. Are they talking about it?

3) For a while now I've been hoping someone would use the storage capacity of CD's to publish lots of arcade classics on one disc. So of course I was elated to hear that *Namco* was doing just that, and that Vol. 1 would have two of my all time favorites: *Bosconian* and *Xenious!* But then I read somewhere that they won't be released in the US because *Sony* has

some stupid rule that all games must have endings. Please tell me this isn't true!

John Tucker
Jackson, MS

Yeah, we're getting a lot of letters from owners of the abandoned 32X platform, and I expect a ton more to come... This is really something that *Sega* has to address, but somehow I doubt they will.

1) Agreed.

2) I've heard nothing from *Sony*, but *X-Band* should have one out this summer.

3) Actually, this was probably just a marketing decision reflecting most Americans' lack of interest.

Dear Postmeister:

I am very sorry this letter is so short, but I only have a couple of questions. What exactly was the *VF2 Portrait* Collection? I know it was a bunch of high-res *VF2* stills, but how did it work? Was it for sale in Japan? If so, then how come nobody saw it over here? Are you getting tired of people asking about *Phantasy Earth* like it was the hype of the century? And finally, do you think *JVC* and *Hitachi* are bringing their *Saturns* to the US?

PS: I think more readers should write in and complain about *Sega*'s stupid denial of *RPG's*. If those white-shirt boneheads at *SDA* think we actually enjoy that *Ghen War*, *BlackFire* crap then they're seriously lacking some shining wisdom (so it's corny, sue me...).

Gideon Valera,
San Antonio, TX

I just want to know why, like, 40% of our letters are coming from Texas these days... Maybe I could run for governor there... Hmmm... Well, anyway, the *Virtua Fighter Portrait Collections* are still coming. You just stick 'em in your *Saturn*, and it plays various renders of the *VF* characters while playing their theme song from the "Dancing Shadows" CD. They're pretty cool little collectors' items (although some of the songs *HURT*), but of course they won't be coming here, as *Virtua Fighter* is nowhere near as popular in the states. No 3rd party *Saturns* are planned for the US market... And I never tire of hearing from *Phantasy Star* fans. They're the only ones I can trust; fine upstanding citizens, each and every one of them. They're few, but proud, and strong. And together, I have no doubt that we will sit here and wait for another two years until *Sega* finally announces that the game is actually "Phantasy Earth and is just a *SimEarth* rip-off, or something. Oh, the pain...

Write to me on P.I. for President!

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P
PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - PHIBE

PUBLISHER - FOX INTER.

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - NA

AVAILABLE - APRIL



MR. GOO
"SHOOT THE GLASS!"



Fox Interactive's incredible looking *Die Hard Trilogy* may just be the movie-to-game port we've been hoping for. Here's the info, in the handy condensed version.

Taking the role of John McClane, you must fight, shoot, and race your way through 36 levels based on all three *Die Hard* movies.

The first movie, *Die Hard*, has you fighting your way up the Nakatomi Plaza in an isometric overhead view. Starting in the parking garage, you must make your way up to the penthouse clearing more than a dozen floors packed with enemies. This isn't just a shoot-fest though - time ticks down as you must find the bombs scattered throughout each level.

Die Harder, the second movie, is a *Virtua Cop*-inspired shooter. In a first-person view, you are taken

DIE HARD

DIE HARD TRILOGY

through the Washington/Dulles Airport, shooting everything that moves.

In the final flick, *Die Hard With A Vengeance*, you're strapped inside a car, racing around New York to find the terrorist's bombs before they turn the city into rubble. Of course, this would be too easy by itself, so you'll find the huge texture-mapped levels

packed with 15 different enemy vehicles to destroy, and loads of pedestrians to mow down, although this type of behavior is wrong... in real life.

If this game plays half as good as it looks, the lack of powerful movie to game conversions will continue to erode. That, and the fact this game condenses three genres into one, makes *Die Hard Trilogy* one to keep a close eye on. We'll have a review very soon.

-Mr. Goo



DIE HARD WITH A VENGEANCE



DIE HARDER

They say the last thing
you see before you die is a
blinding flash of light.

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2 player head-to-head play or multiplayer network in the PC version—up to 8 players wage war.



US GOLD



JOHNNY BAZOOKATONE

We debuted Johnny Bazookatone just four issues ago and by the time you read this it should be perched on retail shelves.

Besides being one of the few side scrolling action adventure titles available for the PS, JB offers some new twists on an old, but tried and true theme. For starters, virtually everything is rendered. The levels themselves consist of rendered backgrounds and huge polygons, and every character from the smallest wet nurse to the hugest bouncer is one hundred percent 3D. In certain cases these features might hamper certain gameplay elements, but not here. By making Johnny small and giving him the ability to hover by shooting downward, the producers have successfully blessed JB with ample playability. The gameplay in JB is quite interesting. By mixing puzzle elements with raw platforming and clever search and destroy gameplay, USG's managed to perk up what could have been just another pretty game. The following is your basic how to guide. The many hidden areas, one-ups, and other such time consuming extras, of which there are many, I'll leave to you.



SIN SIN PENITENTIARY



DEVELOPER - AIG DEV

PUBLISHER - US GOLD

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

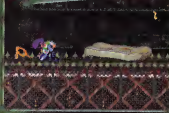
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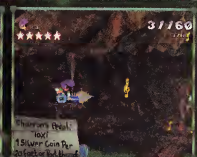
E STORM
TEN TONS OF FUN!



JUMP CAREFULLY AND BEWARE OF SPOTTED MUSHROOMS!



SIN SIN PENITENTIARY IS YOUR FIRST STOP. WHILE IT IS NOT A PARTICULARLY HARD AREA IN TERMS OF DIFFICULTY, IT CAN BE TRICKY. THE BODIES WHICH RISE FROM THE GROUND WILL OFTEN APPEAR HEAD-FIRST, AND IT'S THE HEADS THAT HURT YOU, NOT THE BODIES. SO WATCH FOR THESE. THE LITTLE GREEN GOBLINS ARE ALSO A HAZARD, AS THEY CAN ONLY BE SHOT AT CLOSE RANGE. THERE ARE TWO BONUS AREAS HERE THAT ARE FAIRLY EASY TO FIND, WHERE YOU CAN BOLSTER YOUR MAN COUNT. EXIT PHASE ONE BY SHOOTING DOWNWARD FROM THE HIGHEST PERCH. IN PHASE TWO YOU'LL NEED TO FIND COLORED KEYS TO OPEN CORRESPONDING DOORS. MAKE YOUR WAY TO THE TOP AND TAKE A RIDE ON TEN TONS.

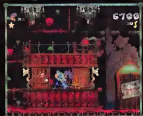




HOTEL DOMINIQUE

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YOUR GOAL IS TO NAB THIS TICKET

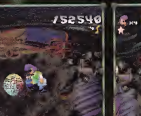


FIRST, SUCK UP THE BELL AND BRING IT TO THE BOUNCER. THE MERE SIGHT OF IT DRIVES HIM LOONNY. HE LOSES IT, GRABS SOME BOXING GLOVES, AND KNOCKS A HOLE IN THE WALL PRODUCING A ONE-UP AND A FEW NOTES. NOW LEAVE THE DISCO AND LOFT OFF THE TABLE TO THE LEFT SHOOTING DOWN. THIS WILL PROPEL YOU ONTO THE AWNING WHICH WILL BOUNCE YOU UP TO THE FLOORS ABOVE. NOW LET'S GET THOSE ELEVATORS WORKING...



MAKE YOUR WAY TO THE BIG CHANOELIER AND JUMP INTO THE LIGHT. ONCE IN THE TOWER SUCK UP THE SOAP THEN BOUNCE SIDE TO SIDE OFF THE GEARS TO GAIN HEIGHT AND JUMP INTO THE ROOM ON THE TOP LEFT. HERE YOU'LL MEET A FREAKISH OLD DUDE THAT JUST WON'T SEEM TO KEEP STILL. SHOOT THE SOAP AT HIM AND HE'LL HIT THE ROAD. NOW JUMP DOWN AND SHOOT THE BREAKER SWITCH TO THE ON POSITION. THE HOTEL ELEVATORS ARE NOW BACK IN ACTION. BEFORE LEAVING THE TOWER YOU MAY WANT TO BOUNCE UP TO THE OPPOSITE ROOM AND CHECK OUT THE FUNKY HOTEL SIGN. NEXT YOU'LL NEED TO LOCATE THE WARPING POTS. THE FIRST ONE IS ON THE RIGHT SIDE THIRD FLOOR. WARP AROUND UNTIL YOU SEE A BRIEF CASE. SHOOT IT TO THE RIGHT, UNDER THE SPIKY LIMB, AND THEN GO AND RETRIEVE IT. NOW SHOOT IT INTO POSITION IN FRONT OF THE ELEVATOR AND TAKE IT TO THE GROUND FLOOR. POSITION IT JUST UNDER THE HOLE TO THE RIGHT OF THE TICKET, WARP TO THE HOLE, JUMP DOWN, LOFT OFF THE CASE, AND NAB THAT TICKET!

POSITION THE CASE UNDER THIS HOLE.



DIABLO'S DINER

DIABLO'S DINER CAN BE HANDED TWO WAYS. AS SOON AS YOU ENTER THIS GHASTLY EATERY, YOU CAN EITHER TAKE A OIP IN THE DINER'S HUGE FISH TANK OR SIMPLY GET ON WITH THE TASK AT HAND: FEEDING THE FAT MAN. THE AQUARIUM LEVEL, BY THE WAY, IS QUITE A BIT BETTER IN THE SATURN VERSION. BOTH, HOWEVER, ARE NICE AND WET AND, IF NEGOTIATED PROPERLY, QUITE REWARDING.



TO EXIT THE DINER YOU MUST FATTEN UP THE GLUTTONOUS PIG AT THE ENO TABLE. WAIT 'TIL A TURKEY FLIES OUT OF THE OVEN, SHOOT IT DOWN, SUCK IT UP, THEN RUN DOWN AND SHOOT IT INTO HIS MOUTH. IT'LL TAKE FOUR BIRDS TO QUENCH HIS APPETITE. ONCE HE'S FULL, BOUNCE OFF HIS HUGE BELLY TO REACH THE EXIT.

MAKE YOUR WAY THROUGH THE VENTILATOR SHAFT, THROWING SWITCHES TO RE-DIRECT AIR FLOW AND STOP THE HUGE FAN BLADES. EXIT TO THE KITCHEN AND GET READY TO DO SOME COOKING.



PICTURED ABOVE, TURN ON THE BURNERS TO ACTIVATE THE PLATFORMS (PAN LIDS) AND START LOCATING EGGS AND FLOUR. YOU MUST SHOOT THESE INGREDIENTS INTO THE BIG POT LOCATED BELOW. ONCE ALL THE INGREDIENTS ARE IN, THE BREAD WILL RISE. RIDE THE RISING BREAD TO THE NEXT LEVEL, SWINGING SPOONS AND CHOPPING MEAT CLEAVERS MUST BE NEGOTIATED CAREFULLY... AND WATCH OUT FOR KITCHEN WITCHES.



THE WARP CANS ARE LOCATED TOP RIGHT... TRY HOT-TOM-FISH TO REACH THE LAST INGREDIENTS

THE MORGUE AMONGST THE TAGGED CORPSES AND NASTY WET NURSES YOU MUST NEGOTIATE YOUR WAY THROUGH THIS SINISTER AREA. LISTEN UP... FIRST PROCEED RIGHT INTO THE ACTUAL MORGUE. ONCE INSIDE AVOID THE WILDO ARM AND NEGOTIATE YOUR WAY TO THE TOP OF THE DRAWERS. NOW USE THE LAMPS TO JUMP ACROSS AND LOCATE THE HEADPHONES...



GET THE HEADPHONES AND THEN TRAVEL ALL THE WAY LEFT THROUGH WARD ONE AND INTO THE DOCTOR'S LAB. GIVE HIM THE HEADPHONES TO KEEP HIM CALM (HE'S GOT A BIG Mallet!)



NEXT, EXIT THROUGH THE FIRST DOOR IN WARD 1 AND LOCATE A VENT SHAFT. YOU'LL REACH OTHER ROOMS THROUGH THESE SHAFTS. IN EACH ROOM YOU'LL NEED TO CATCH THE BOUNCING VIRUS. SHOOT IT DOWN, THEN SUCK IT UP AND BRING THE VIRUS TO THE CURE MACHINE, LOCATED IN THE DOCTOR'S LAB. SHOOT IT IN AND A CURE WILL COME OUT. TAKE THE CURE TO THE CORRESPONDING CHARACTER BLOCKING THE OTHER DOORS AND FIRE AWAY. ONCE THEY EXPLODE, YOU'RE FREE TO ROAM. THE BOSS HERE IS WACKY, BUT PRETTY EASY.



闘神伝 2

The sequel to the best-selling *Toshinden* is almost here, a mere eight months after its US debut... and it's not coming from Sony! That's right, the American rights to *Toshinden 2* have been snagged by Playmates, and they've decided to put TSD2 in your hot little hands FAST. But hey - more power to 'em, Sony probably wouldn't have brought it out until September.

I could condense this review (and the reviews for most 3-D fighters, in fact) into three words: "It looks good." Just like the first *Toshinden*, the sequel plays really, really badly. As soon as you start up the game, you know things are just a little bit wrong: The intro is LIVE ACTION. They hired some frightening flat-chested demon-woman to play Sofia, a twig-boy to play Elji and a plump little girl to play Ellis. The question is... why?? Tamsoft thought they were being strategic and bitchin' when they added such improvements as dashing attacks, ultra-quick dash sidesteps and two-in-ones that actually cut off frames, but it makes little difference. How much fun is a fighting game in which all the fights are on the ground? You do

jump faster in *Toshinden 2*, but mid-air attacks come out sloooooowly and such arcane, mysterious concepts as deep hits and cross-ups don't exist. One basic combo with, say, Elji - a jump-in hard slash, standing hard slash, and fierce uppercut (which would require skill in other fighting games but here needs no more than three button presses) decimates half of your life bar. A super move, which can be done with two buttons, will take off 75% of your life bar. As an example of how poorly balanced this game is, I set the game on the



TRACY

Illustrations: Tsukasa Kotobuki



TOSHINDEN FUN CORNER #1

Ellis and SFA's Chun Li have... uh... strikingly similar taunts. Both say "gomen ne!" ("sorry!") and both taunts hit the opponent. A coincidence? A parody? A tribute? We may never know.

GOMEN NE!



hardest level, put the fireball button on auto and walked away. 20 minutes later I came back and the credits were rolling. Now *that's* game design! I can rant all I want about gameplay, but the fact is, most of the people who buy this game won't give a damn about how it plays - they'll be concentrating on how it *looks*.

And does it ever look good. Though far, far, far, from the majesty that is *Soul Edge*, *Toshiinden 2* probably has the coolest effects on the PlayStation thus far. Tamsoft went for big time light sourcing; I can honestly say this is the best use of it I've seen so far. Unlike the fixed-position light-sourcing of *Toshiinden 1*, *2* sports several

moving, colored sources. The epileptic's nightmare that is Sofia's stage is easily the best in the game, with rapidly rotating multicolored disco lights and a *Saturday Night Fever* pulsating dance floor, all of which emit ever-changing colored lights that reflect off of the characters. Other stages' light-sources change, like a curtain over a huge window opening in Duke's stage and the floor of the Master's stage suddenly flaring with blinding light, but none are as manic, or impressive, as Sofia's.



The stages that aren't lighting-heavy are still packed with effects - little dudes practice martial arts in Fo's stage, cars whiz by in Kayin's night-time alley stage, an ultra-realistic river flows in Rungo's savanna stage, mist and clouds writhe in and out of rock overcroppings in Elji's cliff, and ocean waves roll and crash around Gaia's arena.

It wasn't just backgrounds that got a major overhaul, either - each of the fifteen characters (eleven normal characters, two bosses, and two hidden characters, one of whom, Vermilion, is the scarfiest polygon fighter ever) have been vastly improved, with more facial expressions, better proportions,

Continued



R REVIEW



DEVELOPER: TAMSOFT

PUBLISHER: PLAYMATES

FORMAT: CD

1-2 PLAYERS

DIFFICULTY: DIFFICULTY?

AVAILABLE MAY 1ST



CHACS



far more detailed costumes and hair that isn't a bunch of polygon blocks... you can actually see through the fighters' waifs now. Other updates are the first bouncing polygonal chest in the grand history of female fighting game characters, true transparent shadows for the parts of Ellis's costume that are see-through, and separate claws for each of Fo's fingers, to name but a few.

The two new characters, Tracy and Chaos, are way too cool.

Tracy, one of the sexiest and most bitchin' female game characters of all time, is a blue-haired policewoman with two electric tonfas and one bad-ass sheriff's badge. Chaos, one of the four main bad guys in *Toshiinden*'s storyline (including Gaia, who underwent major renovations in 2, Uranus, one of the 78D2 bosses, and Cupido, the hidden fighter in *Toshiinden S*) is an indescribably insane freak with a sickle and the wackiest voice in fighting history. Both of the new characters are insanely powerful and are much stronger than the returning combatants. It's a shame

Tsukasa Kotobuki's beautiful character designs have to be wasted on a 3-D fighter - imagine a 2-D *Toshiinden* with these characters.

As was the case with *Toshiinden 1*, the music is remarkably average.



TOSHIIDEN FUN CORNER #2

Here's a random sampling of some *Toshiinden 2* special moves. Wouldn't you be terrified if your opponent came out with a Love Lover or a Lollypop?

- Call the Queen
- Love Lover
- Kiss Kiss Kiss
- Hand Rose
- Love Shower
- Lollypop
- Sugar Window
- French Kiss
- Honeymoon
- Electro Spartan
- King Slave
- Pale Singer
- Crazy Planet
- Blood Creak





GAJA

TOSHINDEN FUN CORNER #3

Here for your amusement is a comparison between the real Sofia and the scary freak they used in the live-action intro. Can you figure out which is which? Send your answer to **GAMEFAN** to win fabulous prizes!



heavy on the electric guitars and completely forgettable. At least the big band stuff is gone, though... On the other hand, the voices are excellent, as Takara has gone the SNK route and hired actual voice actors (hoping someday *Toshinden* will be an anime and the voices will be recognizable, no doubt), instead of getting Taro from accounting to come in and record a voice.

Toshinden 2 is substantially better than 1, but the thrill of a 3-D fighter at home is long gone and, consequently, *TSD2* doesn't have the same impact *Toshinden* did. I'm sure the masses will swarm to this game regardless of its massive gameplay flaws, but know this: Much better 3-D fighters are, or soon will be, available on the PlayStation, and all of them are from Namco. One last note: this text was based on the Japanese version of *Toshinden 2*. It's possible some aspects may change in the American final... we'll keep you updated. Let's just hope Playmates' cover art is better than Sony's. -Nick Rott



DESCENT™

The PlayStation version of *Descent*, Interplay's popular 3-D PC shooter, is making its first appearance on a home videogame console, and the results are very impressive. In fact, this PlayStation version of *Descent* is not only the best yet, but one of the best 3-D shooters available, period.

Descent's 3-D texture-mapped environments sport an ominous, dark but futuristic look that fits the sci-fi theme of the game perfectly. Although I have seen better textures on other PlayStation games, *Descent's* 3-D graphics are very good nonetheless. At first, everything has a basic gray "Doom-ish" look to it, but as you progress further into the game, different effects (like the incandescent glow of lava, for example) spice things up a bit. Lighting also plays a vital role in *Descent*. Whenever you shoot your lasers down a dimly lit corridor, you can actually see it light up the wall as it zooms past. In fact, there are certain instances where lighting up a particular area with your lasers are a necessity. Not only that, but the color of the lighting corresponds to the color of the laser beam being shot (red, purple, blue, green, etc.). The overall effect is extremely cool and is exclusive to the PlayStation version.

The 3-D movement is smooth and fairly fast. While this game is

not quite as fast as the fastest Pentium versions of *Descent*, the frame rate is more than acceptable and is actually pretty fluid. There are a few instances where slowdown is apparent (mostly when a huge number of enemies are on screen, which is not very often), but I rarely encountered any such annoyances.

The thing that surprised me the most about *Descent* was the sound. The music is mostly techno (with a little bit of metal thrown in as well) and although it doesn't really match the theme of the game, the tunes are excellent. Its not quite as good as the techno in *Ridge Racer* or *Wipeout*, but it's the next best thing.

Although the sound and visuals in *Descent* are very impressive, it's the depth of gameplay, ease of control and addictiveness that whisks this title past ordinary 3-D PlayStation games and elevates it up to the level currently occupied by *Doom* PS.

Your objectives are simple: A) rescue hostages. B) destroy reactor, and C) get out alive. The only problem is: D) this is all much easier said than done. Your first problem is finding everything. Different colored keycards are scattered throughout each level and must be gathered in order to destroy the reactor. That may sound easy, but the fact that doors and hallways can be located on the



S
STRATEGY



DEVELOPER - INTERPLAY

PUBLISHER - INTERPLAY

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED

AVAILABLE - NOW



K LEE

**AN INTENSE 3-D
CHALLENGE!**

LEVEL 3

LEVEL 3 LUNAR MILITARY BASE



The blue door is on the bottom floor of this room.



The red key is on the other side of this wall... Be careful!



Once you descend to Deck 3 prepare yourself for an ambush.



This is the safest route to Deck 2.



The safest way of getting the blue key is through this door.



The exit is located directly above the hostage room.



Hang a right through this door for a quick charge.



This hole in the roof leads directly to the yellow key.



ceilings, floors, and walls complicate things greatly. Luckily, there's a 3-D autopilot feature, but even so, it's easy to become disoriented in *Descent*.

Because *Descent* is 100% in 3-D, precise control is a must. The control in this game is great. Not only can you move backward and forward but also left and right, flip upside down and pivot on your ship's x and y axis... in other words, total control.

Overall, *Descent* is a fun and addicting game. It combines precise control, detailed 3-D graphics, great sound, great control, refined gameplay, and huge levels. This game is long, hard enough to provide days of play, and is executed well enough for you to enjoy the entire journey. If you enjoy a serious challenge and 3-D games are your thing, then check out *Descent*. Discover a whole new world of 3-D.

-K. Lee



LEVEL 5



Hmm... Could this be an ambush? Naaah!



The yellow door is located on the other side of this door...but beware...



Watch out! A monster maker is on the other side of the blue key.



The hostages are in a room right behind you.



Go through this hallway to get to the blue door.



LEVEL 6

LEVEL 6 - MERCURY SOLAR LAB



Wett, wet, wet...
What have we here?...



...A hidden power-up
room! Isn't that nice!



Before taking a quick left
to destroy the reactor,
note the exit here.



The blue key
is up here.



The hallway leading to
the blue key
is located here.



What's this?
A hidden door?

RETURN FIRE



Return Fire, one of the best games for the 3DO, is now PlayStation-bound thanks to TWI and the programmers at Silent Soft (coders of the original 3DO game). The best way I can describe *Return Fire* to those of you unfamiliar with the 3DO classic is that it's a multi-player shooter and military action/strategy game.

The main objective of *Return Fire* is simple: You must venture into the depths of your enemy's territory in order to find and capture their flag. Your tools consist of a helicopter, a tank, an armored SCUD launcher, and a Jeep. I found the best way of beating a level is to use the helicopter as a reconnaissance vehicle (i.e., to find out where the flag is located), then use the tank or SCUD launcher to take out enemy turrets, and then use the Jeep to grab the flag and return to the home fort. While that may not sound too exciting at first, let me assure you, *Return Fire* is very addicting and a blast to play.



Music plays a huge, huge role in this game. Capture a flag and you'll hear the "Hallelujah" chorus blasting in the background. "The Flight of the Bumblebee" plays as your jeep scurries away from enemy fire, and "The Ride of the Valkyries" is the theme of the helicopter. Very cool.

Where *Return Fire* really comes into its own is when you play against another player. In this split-screen mode, you and a friend get to race (and it really feels like a race) against each other in a flag capturing contest. What's even better is that you can chase each other down and gain an advantage by destroying the other person's vehicle.

The best part about *Return Fire* are the "feelings" it inspires. The feeling of power when you destroy an enemy tower or squash a soldier into a bloody pulp. The sense of urgency while racing against a friend. The feeling of accomplishment after you've struggled to bring back a flag. And more than anything else, the feeling of fun as you enjoy this great game. -K. Lee

R REVIEW



DEVELOPER - SILENT SOFT
PUBLISHER - TWI
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - NOW



K LEE
"HALLELUJAH!"



2 PLAYER SPLIT-SCREEN ACTION!



RESIDENT EVIL

R
REVIEW



DEVELOPER - CAPCOM

PUBLISHER - CAPCOM

FORMAT - CD

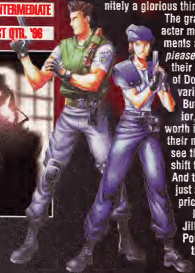
OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - 1ST QTR. '98



TAKUHI



Resident Evil is quite possibly the best 32-bit game yet. Yes, yes, I know, you've probably seen way too many reviews that start in such a way, but this time, I mean it. Really. Truly. Swear to God. Seriously. I'm not even kidding. I haven't had this much fun with a video game in years.

I've eagerly followed *Resident Evil*'s development since it was less than 40% done, but I was surprised by the changes in this nearly finished version. *Resident Evil* is now far more of a puzzle solving adventure, and a bit less of the action-packed kill-fest I was expecting. The ammunition and herbs are few and far between, and now it's sometimes much wiser to run than fight. But the depth and challenge of the puzzles, the complexity of the storyline, and the vastness of the play area more than makes up for the slightly diminished testosterone level.

This mechanics themselves are very similar to *Alone in the Dark*, with the emphasis on careful exploration, puzzle-solving, and experimentation with various items. The big difference, though (besides the obvious differences in graphics quality) is that the battles are no longer a frustrating ordeal, but a darkly sadistic treat to savor and enjoy. It's really never a good idea to attack dogs, as they'll usually leave you alone, but nothing is more entertaining than waiting for one to pounce, hitting it right in the chest, and watching it smash to the ground with a splat of blood and a terrified yelp. Heh heh heh... The play mechanics are full of good ideas, too, like the way weapons do different amounts of damage depending on how close you are to your foe. *Resident Evil*'s well-thought-out engine, precise controls, and clear visuals are definitely a glorious thing.

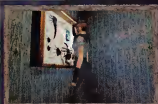
The graphics are excellent, especially in the character movement. Indeed, the character movements are a bit too real... I mean, someone please tell me that Capcom didn't just go down to their local animal shelter, sneak out a truck full of Dobermans, and then blow them away with various types of guns just to motion capture it. But hey, though I don't condone such behavior, in this case it would actually be kinda worth it. You can't possibly understand how good their movement patterns are until you actually see them walking, panting, swagging as they shift their weight from one side to the other... And the little details, like the way the enemies just start chowing down when you die, are priceless.

In the storyline department, you're either Jill Valentine or Chris Redfield of the Raccoon Police Department, and, while searching for the team of cops who vanished while inves-





SUN CRESCENT



Search the bug display twice, and the second time you'll find a switch. Pull it to drain the aquarium, which will now be light enough to push out of the way (to the RIGHT). With that gone, move the bookcase to the left. There ya go.

Once you get the other two crescents (below), you'll be able to leave the mansion and journey off into the courtyard, pool, guardhouse, sewers, and who knows where else. Just slide them into this display in the northernmost part of the 1st floor, and you're ready to get going.



RADIO



You never need the radio, but with it in your possession, you can communicate with your lost comrades and reveal some key plot points.

Before the snake boss you'll find Brave team member

Richard. If you're Chris, it's too late and he's dead. But if you're Jill, he'll still have a bit of life in him. To save him, get the antidote in the room with the bed and typewriter... BUT DON'T DAWDLE! You have only a few minutes to do it before it's too late.



STAR CRESCENT



The Star Crescent is guarded by a little trap, so be careful. Before you do anything, slide the grey statues over the drains in the floor. Then push aside the red statue, and press the button on the floor. Failure to do the first step will result in a very nasty surprise.

The other crescent is being guarded by the first boss, but you'll have to look closely to find it. Don't miss the clip in that room, either.



Nick Rost's PLAYSTATION PREVIEWS



D&D

Capcom's blazing arcade side-scroller *Dungeons & Dragons: Tower of Doom* is on its way to the PlayStation for a spring release. Capcom is even adding graphic enhancements like transparent shadows and spell effects.



ARC THE LAD

SCEA is wisely bringing G-Craft's *Arc the Lad*, a strategy game with gorgeous visuals and the best PlayStation music so far, in terms of both PCM quality and composition, to America this spring.

BEYOND THE BEYOND

Camelot's graphically impressive yet highly mediocre RPG *Beyond the Beyond* is coming to America in June. *BTB* features real-time 3-D battles and a vast array of annoying puzzle dungeons.



X-MEN

Capcom's *X-Men* is currently being worked on for a forthcoming release by Acclaim. It remains to be seen whether Capcom has the power to replicate the arcade's massive amount of parallax and ultra-smooth animation on the PS. We'll have a review as soon as possible.

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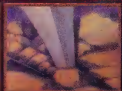
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Williams

SATURN

SECTOR



R REVIEW



SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - TREASURE

PUBLISHER - SEGA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-6

DIFFICULTY - CIRCUMSTANTIAL

AVAILABLE - LATE MARCH



E. STORM
TREASURE IS SIMPLY THE
BEST THERE IS.
GUARDIAN HEROES IS PURE
GENIUS.

Amidst a sea of 3-D and shiny polygons a true game emerges... The initial crop of impressive rendered next-gen software carried with it that initial feeling of ecstasy felt whenever you experience something new. My adrenaline soared as I awed at the sight of all the shiny newness of 32-bit. But after a few of

these visual masterpieces I began to realize they're mostly show, and little go. Being one of the only GF members not on a steady diet of SF Alpha, I rely on platformers (of which there are like two short ones), and RPGs (of which there are like none of besides the imports I've long conquered), for my stimuli. But where's my





Han and The Undead Hero peacefully make their way across town... or at least that was the plan.



Sonic? Castlevania? Ghouls and Ghosts? Hello, anybody listening? By the way, if they render any of those characters I'll simply puke.

To date, the only 32-bit soft that has truly challenged me was *Hermie's Hopperhead*, a Mario World-like adventure with big staying power (but hurtin' music). But *Hermie's* hand drawn, and obviously not flashy enough for the US game scene. So my dreams of a US version (with re-arranged music) are fading fast. Bottom line... I needed a real game! Needless to say when Sega granted us the exclusive on Treasure's first Saturn game, *Guardian Heroes*, I was elated.

As you may recall, Treasure was responsible for the under-marketed, under-hyped best game ever for the Genesis, *Gunstar Heroes*. We got behind it, even went to Treasure and made some friends, but the game received little support from



30A and never achieved the status it deserved. So this is like *agya vu* for me. Once again we've bagged the exclusive, except Sega now realizes the power Treasure possesses and is intent on getting them a hit. All I know is that I'm lookin' at one of the best games I've ever played. They've done it again.

With *Guardian Heroes*, Treasure has successfully merged three genres; fighting, action, and role playing. And they've done it so well that it

HAN SOMEWELL

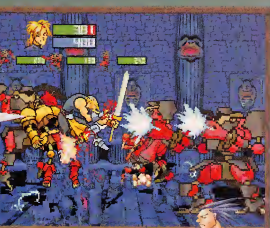
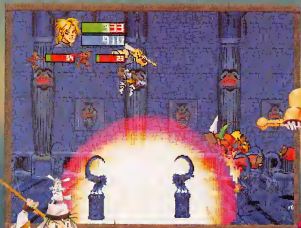
NICOLE NEIL



VS. MODE

Six player simultaneous madness! Choose from up to 45 different characters, color 'em the way you want and then watch in amazement. Screens packed with huge sprites, crazy line scrolling, and ultra smooth zooming move as smooth as a chili laxative. Even lil' Ed Cognac can join in the fun!... and this is just the bonus game!





UNDEAD HERO



RANDY GREEN

makes all those rendered gummies look like, well, tundra. Hand drawn art is where it's at. Motion cap, and SGI dolls are fine for a while, but if you're like me, soon you will begin to see the limitations these methods bring along with them. It's true, CK2 and Skeleton Warriors are fantastic games, but it's also true that



they do not have the depth or playability of a hand drawn game such as this.

The gameplay in GH consists of many elements. The fighting/action, which is the best I've ever seen, is enhanced by the depth of the playfield. Fighting takes place in three different depths: far;



IBUSHI GINJIRO



mid, and close. You can use these to get behind the enemies or avoid attacks. Tapping the button moves you in or out one notch, holding sends you all the way across. Also, many magic spells carry across the plane. Speaking of magic spells... there are many. Most, when performed, produce amazing special effects, some so huge and so often you can literally lose your character amongst them. Next come the fighting game moves. Each character has several, can block, and even juggle opponents. To further add diversity, at the end of each stage you can upgrade your characters status by your liking. Attack strength, defense,

luck, constitution, intelligence, and speed are all set by you and have a direct outcome in the game. Role playing comes into play much of the time as well. Not only do the Heroes themselves converse often when making decisions, but you can taunt, choose to fight or run, and choose different destinations. On top of all this, the music is beyond perfect, the amount of sprites on screen unbelievable, and the art, well, take a look.

Everything line scrolls on the ground separately like weeds, statues, etc. and there's additional parallax in the backgrounds. The feeling of depth has never been displayed better. As to how long the game is, well, I'm not sure yet. Continues are limited, and the bosses, of which I've shown none,



SELENA CORSAIR

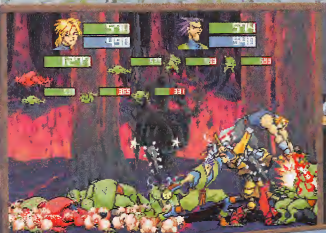




(gotta review it next month) are massive. The adventure itself can be played by two players simul, and throughout, friends will join you. Undead Hero is especially cool. He's an evil Hero trying hard to become good. He can't help himself, though, and once in a while he'll start basting on a fellow Hero or kill a helpless villager. His struggle with evil must play big in the ending... There's also a vs. mode where you accommodate up to six players! Here you can be anyone you've killed, up to 45 characters! Believe it or not there is much more to be said about Guardian Heroes. As it is, this may be the longest preview in history, so I'll leave you to the rest of the mag. Don't miss next month's review!

-E. Storm

EDWARD M. COGNAC

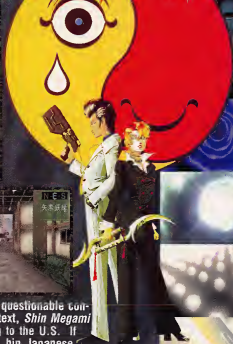




RIGHT
TALK
ELECTRE
AUTO



真・女神転生 SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI DEVIL SUMMONER



Despite the hard RPG elements, morally questionable content, and thousands of pages of Japanese text, *Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner* is actually coming to the U.S. If you're not familiar with the *MegaTen* (the hip Japanese nickname... don't I just think that I'm *sooo* cool!) series, don't feel bad.

Despite the fact that a new *MegaTen* game comes out seemingly once every 45 minutes in Japan, they've been totally neglected by American game companies... until now. Atlus, the developers of the series, is bringing it out here in time for an early summer release.

MegaTen's world is a weird one. The setting is present day Japan, but the mood is a unique hybrid of *Shadowrun*-esque cyberpunkedness and ancient daemonic lore. The game system is similar to *Wizardry*, almost entirely first-person and with lots of enemy encounters. But one feature unique to the *MegaTen* series is the ability to just talk to your foes... you can make friends, bribe them to leave you alone, or try to coerce them to join your party. Sometimes they'll even bribe *you* not to kill them.

The character you play is just a normal Japanese boy. Your girlfriend calls you up, and you go out to get some coffee, and run a few errands at the library. Since she forgot her library card, you let her borrow yours to check out some weird book that theorizes that Japan used to be ruled by mages who could command demons. As you walk home alone, you're confronted by a very evil looking fellow, who kindly offers to not kill you if you immediately hand over the library book that's checked out under your name. You don't have it, but he's not about to buy that, and lives up to his end of the bargain... so nary 15 minutes into the game, you're dead. But after a very cool death sequence, you meet Death, who informs you that it wasn't your time to die. Unfortunately, your body isn't in very good shape, so what's he supposed to do with you...? When you wake up, you find yourself in the morgue, now occupying the body of a mysterious, polyester-clad, heavily-armed man who saved you from what appeared to be an army of monsters earlier in the day, but died soon after.

A few problems. It seems that his soul isn't too happy about this arrangement, as Death's little game of musical chairs has left him without a physical form. Second, you have to take on his duties, which include controlling the demons that are invading Japan, and third (shiver), *polyester*? Ugh! The suit and hairstyle hurt, but he does have a mage-i-licious girlfriend, tons of allies all around the city, and access to some very advanced weaponry, so assuming his form is not without its high points...

As you can see, *Devil Summoner* has clean, crisp 3-D graphics (just saved as animation, not as real polygons, like in *Phantasy Star*), excellent enemy design, and the best FMV I've ever seen on the Saturn (and there's plenty of it, too). We've barely scratched the surface of the Japanese release, but I can't be more excited that someone finally has the guts to release an RPG as innovative, mature, and challenging as *Devil Summoner*. Rest assured that we'll be back with more on this title as it nears its domestic release. -Takuhi

EXCLUSIVE



SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - ATLUS

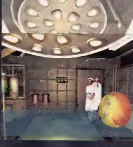
PUBLISHER - ATLUS

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - JUNE



REVIEW



SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - SCREAMING PINK

PUBLISHER - PLAYMATES

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - MARCH



MR. GOO
I KNEW A SURFIN' COW
ONCE...



GROOVY!



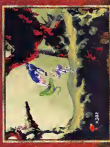
SEGA



As one of the few people here at GameFan who doesn't go wild over every platform game, I was less than curious as to what my impressions of *Earthworm Jim 2 Saturn* would be. They just said, "Trust us, this one's different" ... and they were right. In the past I'd never really found platform games much fun, but suddenly, thanks to an earthworm equipped with a (big breath) ultra-high-tech-indestructible-super-space-suit, I've become a platforming fan.

It's hard to explain exactly how *EWJ2* changed me. Perhaps it was dipping a potentially exploding cow into a giant tub of milk to extinguish it. Or maybe it was because the only way to get past the giant cat in the lake is to launch a lat pig into the fish bowl strapped to his head. And I'm sure the surfing cows who smile "Well done!" at the end of each level had some thing to do with it.

To put it lightly, this game is totally insane. And for some stranger reason, that's what appealed to me. Deciding to leave



TENDER!



everything normal (and moral) behind them, Shiny went off the deep-end last year in creating this sequel. Is that bad? Hail! What could be more fun than trying to bounce small puppies between two buildings (and seeing them splatter when you miss), or flying high above the ground pushing a balloon full of dynamite while fat men are being catapulted into the air to slow you down??

Yes, this is still the exact same *Earthworm Jim 2* you've played on the SNES and Genesis, but with greatly improved lighting effects, all-new backgrounds with amazing amounts of parallax and color, and a perfectly suited classic soundtrack. While keeping all of the feel and control of the original versions, Screaming Pink (they did the Saturn honors) have delivered exactly what an older game on a new system should be, a visually improved version of the original.

And even though there's nothing really new here in terms of gameplay, the 32-bit version of *Earthworm Jim 2* is an outstandingly fun game that's perfect for every Saturn owner who loves platformers, and to those of us who just don't know it yet alike.... -Mr. Goo

R REVIEW



SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - PROBE
PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - NOW



SLASHER QUAN
I AM NOT AMUSED!

MORTAL KOMBAT II

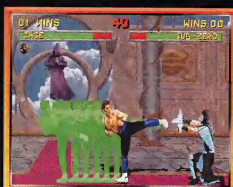
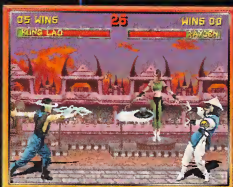
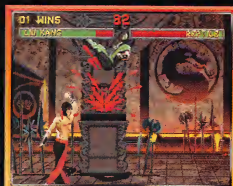
I just didn't think this could possibly happen again. Stupid me. I just assumed that, naturally, MK II for Saturn would be a near-perfect translation of the coin-op (finally), and that, in one fell swoop, Probe would atone for the destruction of the Genesis and 32X versions. Boy, was I wrong. The masked butcher of *Mortal Kombat* conversions; Probe, has done it again with a thoroughly shoddy "version" of the arcade game, featuring crappy new music, almost no voice, and constant gameplay-disrupting chunkiness.

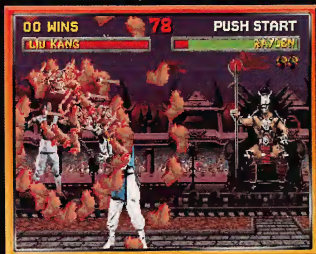
I'll start with the good news first; what little there is. Finally, we appear to have a technically accurate rendition of MK II's gameplay, including all of the juggle combos that worked in the arcade. Certain ESSENTIAL combos were missing from the Genesis/32X versions (such as Scorpion's defensive juggle High Punch, High Punch, Teleport, Spear, Uppercut) that have all made it to Saturn. This version is so faithful to the arcade that even one of the GLITCHES from the arcade (Raiden's Shocking Grasp move doesn't work when you are fighting the computer

Raiden) was retained. I understand attention to detail, but that was going a little far...

The fundamental problem with gameplay is that this version is just LITTERED with annoying chunks, jerks, and stops at random points during the action. I understand the need to stop gameplay momentarily for fatalities to load, but this game is just ridiculous, bordering on unplayable. (As a side note, Shang Tsung's morphs cause loading time just like PS MK 3.)

To add insult to the jerky gameplay (and I just don't buy that it's the Saturn's fault; it must be the programmers'), the absolutely brilliant musical geniuses at Probe decided to, once again, completely re-score the entire soundtrack. What was wrong with the original arcade music? Did the license only count for the game, not Midway wizard Dan Forden's tunes? I doubt it. I want to go on record with something no magazine has ever had the guts (or brains) to say: The music in MK II Gen/32X was an ATROCITY, a crime against Mortal fans-like myself... most deaf mag reviewers said it was exact to the coin-op. The Saturn version is nothing like the.





previous Sega renditions and isn't terrible, but still not even in the same hemisphere as the arcade game. The final sin of this CD's opine is that 95% of all the voices are just simply gone (even Raiden's "Your mother's from L.A." Torpedo cry, a necessary element of *Mortal Kombat*), and many, many godly sound effects from the arcade are also missing (such as the foreboding chime when you successfully input a fatality code). This one plays like it's incomplete, maybe only 50% done... but our CD said final. If so, it is just sad and I can't see anyone picking this game over the not-perfect, but still-excellent SNES version. -Slasher Quan

R REVIEW



SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM

PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM

FORMAT - CD

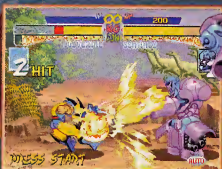
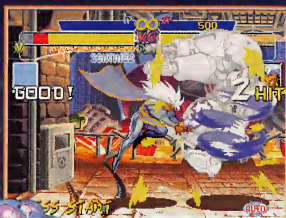
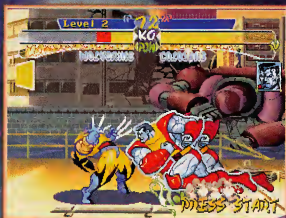
OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - NOW



K. LEE
QUITE AN
ACHIEVEMENT...
MANGA
COMICS



Of all the 2-D fighting games I've seen for the Saturn, Capcom's *X-Men*, to me, ranks as one of the very best. In just about every category you care to name, *X-Men* is an impressive piece of software. The graphics and animation, while not arcade perfect, are fantastic, the music and sound effects are directly sampled from the coin-op, and the gameplay replicates the arcade perfectly. Just how good is this game, you ask? Let me count the ways...

Human beings are a fickle sort. Although many of us have the ability and desire to look beneath a surface in order to find substance, an equal amount of us require pleasant visual stimuli before taking on any new venture... In English, if *X-Men* doesn't look good, we ain't playin' it. Don't worry, it does! From the intricately designed background art and highly detailed character art, to the multiple layers of parallax and sublime line-scrolling, this game is an example of visual craftsmanship.

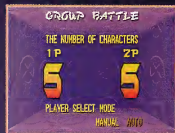
If you enjoyed the gameplay of the coin-op, then you'll be in heaven with the Saturn version of *X-Men*. It's weird, when I first played *X-Men* in the arcade, I didn't like the way it played. One button super moves that hit 15 times or more, air blocks and chain-link combos, levels 5 screens high or more, super jumps, it was all so unusual that I didn't



PLAY AS AKUMA

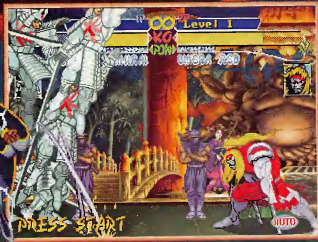
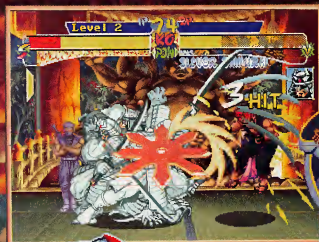
Start at Spiral, wait two seconds, highlight Silver Samurai (one second), Rogue (one second), Colossus (one second), Iceman (one second), Storm (one second), Cyclops (one second), Wolverine (one second), Omega Red (one second), then go back to Silver Samurai, wait two seconds, and press Fierce, Roundhouse and Short at the same time.





GROUP BATTLE MODE

Pick up to five team members for a grueling all out battle!



give it a chance. Now that I've gotten the chance to play *X-Men* more thoroughly, I kinda like it. That's the beauty of perfect arcade translations. What would you rather do? Spend hundreds of dollars mastering an arcade fighting game, or pay \$50-\$60 for basically the same thing at home?

You want sound? Well, not only does *X-Men* have beefy sound effects and excellent tunelage (courtesy of the musicians at Alph-Lyla), but 100% of the sound and music has been directly sampled from the arcade *X-Men*. The music has that classic Capcom, pseudo-MegaMan-ish sound I've come to know and love.

The only thing that's not "arcade perfect" in *X-Men* is the animation. The arcade game was renowned for its unbelievable animation, and indeed, when you get to the player select screen, every frame is intact. Start the game and... what's this? There are a few frames of character animation missing! Refund, I want a refund! Seriously though, only the most anal gamers would give a hoot (and some us couldn't even detect a difference, at first). *X-Men* is, simply, a great translation of the arcade game. This game is fun for experts and novices alike. -K. Lee





R REVIEW



SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM

PUBLISHER - CAPCOM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - FEBRUARY



NICK ROX



The ultimate fighting game has finally arrived on Saturn, but with a few conspicuous flaws. Comparing the Saturn and PlayStation *Alpha*s is like any incarnation of *SFII* on the Genesis and SNES; with one you get slightly better control (due to Sega's godly pad design, not the game programming), yet screwed graphics and hurin' samples, and with the other you get much better graphics, and, in this case, longer loading time.

The first thing I noticed about Saturn *Alpha* (after seeing the intro, in which you get two different characters instead of one) was the mashed samples. They're very tinny and far-away sounding, kind of like the winning quotes in *VF2*. Capcom tried to be fun by adding an echo to the super samples, which compounds the problem further. The second flaw I noticed is the most severe, to me at least. The super combo shadows are NOT BLUE! They're sort of blue-tinged, so that the colors of the characters' costumes show through. Why this is the case is beyond me. Perhaps Capcom thought it was an upgrade, to me it's not the arcade. Slightly lower down on the annoyance level is the fact that taunting is accomplished by pressing L and R at the same time. This should be changeable in the options, but it's not. Maybe I'm nit-picking, but I feel that these are severe problems. On the plus side, the game con-

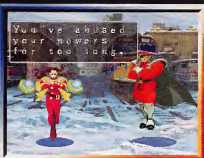
trols perfectly (as if it wouldn't), and the loading is anywhere from 90%-50% of the PS' speed. In vs. mode you don't see much of a difference, but when playing the CPU the con-

trast is dramatic. Another upgrade from the arcade that I didn't mention last month (we didn't have the boss codes yet) is the addition of a real voice for Dan instead of Ryu's at a slightly lower pitch.

Capcom changed the boss codes for the PlayStation version in Japan, and it looks like they changed them yet again for the American version. Try as we might, we couldn't get them or the Ryu/Ken vs. Bison code to work. In the Japanese versions you simply beat the game on any level above 6, but perhaps you have to actually enter a code in the American versions.

For those that didn't read the various *Alpha* PlayStation articles, Capcom has added a beyond-cool training mode in which you can practice (and record) your combos, a no-loading vs. mode and myriad other game





VS.



options, like speed, number of rounds, auto-blocking, and damage level. The most exciting new change is the addition of arranged music, some of which is great and some of which is 120% wah-wah mystification. Luckily, you can change between arranged and original tunes. If you're a Saturn owner, you must buy *Alpha*. Despite small problems, it plays perfectly and loads fast. Personally, I'd rather play the PlayStation version for its arcade perfection, but either 32-bit powerhouse will provide endless SF joy. Next stop... *III*.

-Nick Rox

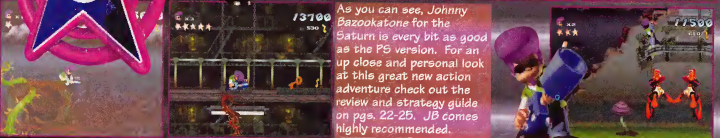


E. STORM'S U.S. SATURN PREVIEWS

3 OF JAPAN'S BEST (INCLUDING 2 RPG'S!) AND US GOLDS FIRST SATURN PLATFORMER WILL UNDOUBTEDLY GET US THROUGH THE SPRING. PANZER 2 (SEE MY IMPORT PREVIEWS FOR ANOTHER LOOK). WRINKLE RIVER STORY, AND DARK SAVIOR WILL KEEP US OUT OF THE SUN THIS SUMMER. JUST THINK WHAT NICE SKIN WE'LL HAVE!



Clockwork Knight 2, released September '95 in Japan (see GF review, vol. 3 issue 9) is finally ready for US consumption. Easily the most impressive side scrolling effort on the Saturn (or any other system for that matter) to date, CK2 offers twice the visual impact and playability of CK1, the ability to ride Baro Baro-Pepperouchau's trusty toy horse, and features some of the best bosses ever conceived. To put it simply, CK2 is a landmark achievement in the realm of special effects and insane polygon visuals. It eclipses part one in every category. Recently released in Japan was Pepperouchau's "good luck bag" which includes both parts one and two, along with all of the movies and songs, a special horse game where you can take on boss after boss using the limber "Ginger" Pepperouchau's arch rival in the quest for Chalsea's love, and some wacky bonus games. I grabbed that version for this preview so you could get a look at Ginger. Maybe the U.S. version will have a Ginger code... stay tuned. Something tells me we haven't seen the last of this series yet...





Perhaps the best experience I've had thus far on a 32-bit system is the 50 or so hours of joy I spent with *Magic Knight Rayearth*. This is, to me, the best Action/RPG available today and it's headed your way from Working Designs. To my knowledge (Victor's still not speaking to me because I gave *Lunar 2* a 98), Working Designs is going the extra mile, re-recording the hours of actual speech rather than replacing it with text only. This graphic wonder will remind you why we love RPG's so much, and should not be missed by anyone with a Saturn and a pulse. If you're a real die-hard, seek out the amazing music CD from Japan: it's one of the best RPG soundtracks I've ever heard. This is the Sega I know and love. I hope they continue down this road. Remember, in Japan, the Saturn is number 1... Hmmm, I wonder why...



I was hoping that in the wake of Rayearth, the mighty *Shining Wisdom* would not be overlooked. *Shining Wisdom* is an action/RPG lover's dream come true. It's super long, has fantastic music, is full of puzzling labyrinthine and features more magic and character upgrades than you've ever experienced. Besides these great gameplay elements, *SW* features an entirely rendered cast of characters. For a closer look at *Shining Wisdom*, refer to the Oct. '95 issue of *GF*. *WD* is currently working on *SW*, and a second quarter '96 release is expected.



GEN-32

JAPAN SOFT

The word "unique" doesn't even come close to describing the way *Robo Pit* looks or plays. Looking a bit like *Jumping Flash* with a bunch of outstanding lighting and strategic elements, Altron has created an incredibly fun way to kill your time.

Starting near the bottom of the robot fighting circuit, you must battle your way through 100 crazy looking fighters to get to the top by using pre-made robots or designing one of your own. Now this is the feature that makes *Robo Pit* one of the best PS imports I've played: There's just as many options!

You could literally make thousands of different robots with the 15 heads, 8 eye designs, 12 "legs" = 30 (you start with only 4, and acquire the rest defeating enemies) different long and short range weapon arms, and 16 different powers for every part to choose from. Each of these attachments aren't just for looks either, as the gameplay will dramatically change depending on your choices. And with high equipment and the ability to jump, roll to right, block, jump, slide to the side, and unleash super attacks with a tap of the button, *Robo Pit* plays creatively.

One of the best features in any fighting game is the ability to fight a cut-throat winner your friend, and *Robo Pit*'s cool split-screen two player action was a disappointment. Plus, the only option to save your robot (along with his experience and progress) to a memory card, you can take your creation to the road.

Altron, like Comi and Neversoft, has been out of official reviewers to bring us an interesting solid game. In a world where big companies seem to think it's time to keep shrinking, and the game industry grows dark after 1995, it's nice to see small games like this slipping in from the sides. Mr. Goo

R
REVIEW



DEVELOPER - ALTRON

PUBLISHER - ALTRON

FORMAT - CD

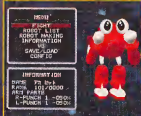
OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

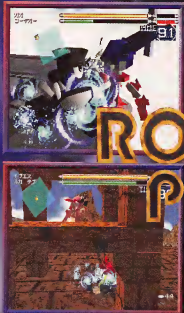
AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



MR. GOO
THE POSSIBILITIES ARE
ENDLESS.



▲ Assemble your own wacky lil' robo-dude! ▲



2
Player
Head-to-Head
Action





With original character and mechanical designs by renowned anime artist Shiro Masamune (of "Applesseed" fame), a supposedly vast, 3-D world, and a neat plastic gun, I thought *Horned Owl* was going to be a very cool game. Instead, it turned out to be a tedious 3-D gun game. Here's why...

The overall play mechanics aren't much of a departure from *Virtua Cop's*. You're still "on tracks," shooting everything that moves in an impressive 3-D world. The gameplay, on the other hand, is totally different. Taking the role of Ryo or Marco (two cops in the futuristic terrorist fighting squad, "Horned Owl"), and equipped with a power suit, your character leaps off tall structures and even flies. Your life is represented by your suit's shield energy (a realistic departure from VC's semi-invincible cops), and your gun carries an impressive 16 shells and up to five grenades. The 5 levels in HO are huge and full of twists and turns, and at the end of each scenario, a huge boss awaits you. There's



HORNED OWL

even a small high-quality anime clip between each round. Sound good? Well, it would be, if *Horned Owl* didn't lack something I like to call "enjoyable gameplay."

Well, that's a tad harsh; the game is fun for the first five minutes or so... Shortly thereafter, you'll begin to realize nothing new is happening, and the true pain of *Horned Owl* begins. It's not just the slow pace, nor is it facing the same five enemies again and again,

or even the complete lack of suspense. It's the many periods in each level where you'll find yourself doing absolutely nothing while the story unfolds.

It would seem *Horned Owl* is Sony's response to *Virtua Cop*, and for that reason I was expecting much more in terms of depth and gameplay. *Horned Owl*, being the first PlayStation gun game, and currently available exclusively in Japan, should be sought out by only the most die-hard shooter fans (or plastic gun collectors). All others need not apply... Big Snooze-ola on this one, I'm afraid. -Mr. Goo

R REVIEW



DEVELOPER - ALPHA SYSTEM

PUBLISHER - SCE

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - BEGINNER

AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



MR. GOO
KEEP THE GUN...
SELL THE GAME!



Mobile Suit GUNDAM

R
REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - BANDAI

PUBLISHER - BANDAI

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN

The Gundam saga will *never* die! Bandai has once again taken the *Mobile Suit Gundam* concept in a new direction, this time as a combination side-scrolling action/shooting battle. It looks like *Gundam* fans have finally gotten themselves a real action game.

At first glance, MSG appears to be just another 2-D walk 'n shoot, but it's actually much more. Your MSG mech is equipped with an assortment of weapons (three of them essential), a jet pack and a super shield. You'll need to master using these weapons simultaneously to achieve your mission goal. Enemies attack you from the back and foreground, requiring you activate your lock-on laser, which is able to fire into and out of the playfield, as your mech rotates on its center axis. In between the terrestrial areas are space shooting sequences, where the game changes pace but the play mechanics remain very similar. In both modes of play, blocking with your shield, locking

onto targets, and blasting the enemies around you make up the basic formula. The ability to place reinforcements along each level via the on screen grid (displayed before each battle) is not only a first but adds considerable depth to each stage. Following *The 0079 Series* to a tee, you'll encounter every obstacle as seen in the actual anime. When





2-D IN 3-D!



Mobile Suit Gundam is the first 2-D action adventure in which you rotate on a center axis. Your lock-on laser tracks enemy sprites as they appear far away in space and, in your face.



confronting the powerful armada bosses, the emphasis is on memorizing patterns and weapon usage. Fortunately, the game was designed with a save feature because many of them come back for more, in more frequently changing patterns. MSG will ultimately take a full day or more to complete.

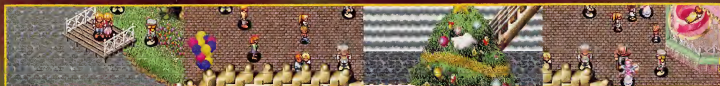
have for the most part achieved: a 2-D game with 3-D depth and strategic elements. They've made the 2-D perspective deeper by revolving the action around a center axis, and it works well. The Gundams are modeled perfectly and as you can see, the visuals, though a tad stiff, are excellent.

The coolest thing about MSG is that it successfully places you in the action, through brilliant animation sequences (in Japanese) and innovative game design. Perhaps the most astonishing feature is that the game literally never loads. Animated cinematics break in constantly, and full screen between-level dramas (up to three minutes long) never slow the action down. Given the current state of gaming here in the US, import lovin' game fan's

should give this one a serious look. The chances of it emerging here are, well, zero.

-Takahara





R REVIEW



DEVELOPER - HUMAN
PUBLISHER - HUMAN
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



EVIL LIGHTS
BURNIN' HOT, OR ALL
WET?

THE FIREMEN

Addressing the needs of all those who hoped and hoped for a game adaptation of *Backdraft*, Human answered this twisted craving by releasing what has apparently become, with the appearance of a new chapter on the PlayStation, a series of games: *The Fireman*. In this installment, you take control of a duo whose names are sure to send shivers up the spine of pyros the world over: Pete Grey and Danny McClean (I'm not kidding...). These two are a pair of firefighters who, needless to say, march off



to extinguish a series of fiery outbreaks, this time occurring on Christmas Eve in New York City.

The Firemen 2 would be your basic overhead action-adventure game if it weren't for the fact that, instead of wielding a sword or gun, you spurt out water with a high-powered hose, and instead of killing "enemies," you extinguish patches of fire. Doesn't sound too exciting, does it? Well that's because I haven't mentioned the fact that Pete and Danny track through places in which the fire is actually *intent* on seeing the two dead. Throughout the game, the firemen are attacked by blazing mounds, flaming debris, and some bad-ass trails of fire (I never thought fire could be "bad-ass," but...). As if all of this weren't strange enough, things seem even weirder when you realize that burning mini-copters and combusting humans come reeling out of nowhere at our heroes in every stage.

And it's not like Pete and Danny are encountering this

strange phenomena in a fantasy land: the locales they're directed to by Winona, their correspondent at the station, are sort of mundane - a theme park, an aquarium, an animatronic dino land, a hotel, and so on. There are tasks to fulfill in each stage (save the little girl, find Pete's daughter after a freshly-rescued man has torched the place by fighting a cigarette in relief, etc.), but unless you clear the stages in time by succeeding in your directive or "killing" the boss, your "mission" will have failed. Succeed, and you get to witness a touching outcome.

The only thing about *The Firemen 2* that takes advantage of the PlayStation is the incredible music - and that's only because it's CD-based. Graphically and otherwise, this could be a Neo game, and a fairly boring one at that. The only saving grace is the game's absurd touches. So, if you're thinking "Boy, I'd like to save a pack of frenzied penguins from a bunch of malicious fire," think *The Firemen 2*. -Evil Lights



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R REVIEW



DEVELOPER - SCE

PUBLISHER - SCE

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED

AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



MR GOO
K2 ECLIPSES THE ORIGINAL IN EVERY WAY.

KILEAK, THE BLOOD 2

Reason in Madness

When the first *Kileak* came out, I was really not that impressed. The play mechanics were kind of broken, the music was rather drab, and there was little in the way of a storyline. But now, *Kileak 2* has come to the PlayStation, and I love it! This is a worthy sequel, especially considering the game that spawned it. But before I rave about the game, here is the basic storyline...

In the year 2038, society has been completely taken over by a new order. The people of this age lived under a huge super-computer named "Gene," which was supposed to help mankind develop the future society. But something very tragic happened to this once-peaceful society. A virus, known as GIGARI, struck those living in the upper world, as well as the super-computer Gene. Almost everyone died, but the few who survived tried to run the government with what was left, and had taken it into their own hands. Carlos Rosche, a leader of the elite DeSol VISION group, had attempted to rule a non-government agreement, but was thwarted in the process. Everyone in Neural City was forced to dwell below those of government rank, living like ground hogs, left to die. But a few

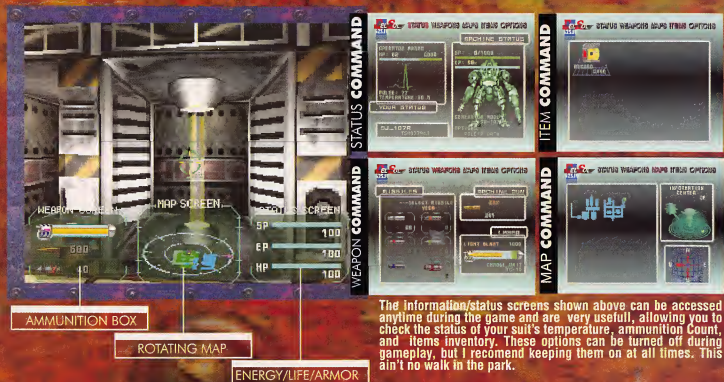
went into hiding.

You remember growing up, and fighting alongside Carlos in many battles, but now you have grown old of this sick and twisted place. You are not the same person as you were long ago. War after war, your nerves have finally broken down. Bifross' plots have been put in the past. Now all you need is the girl you love... Reira... (Uh... Gimme a break!).

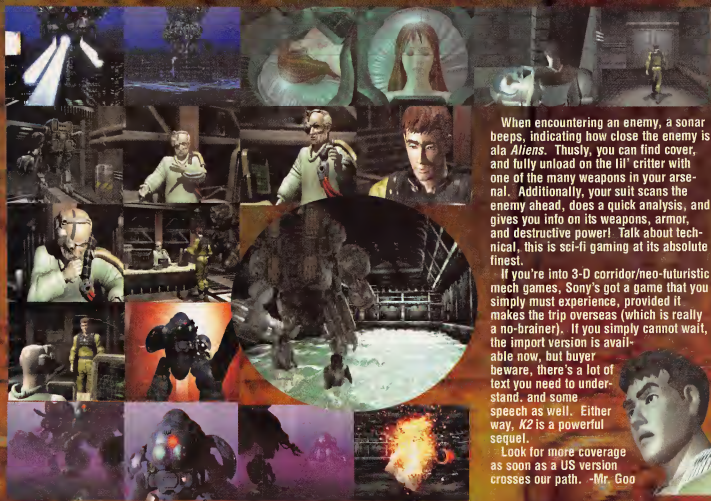
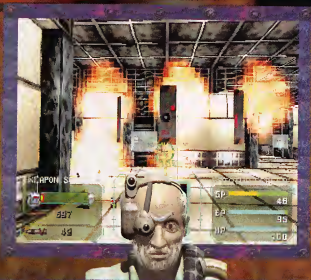
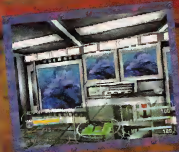
I know that this looks like your typical *Doom* clone, but this is *KILEAK*, and it's completely original.

In *Kileak 2*, the intriguing puzzles, ambient sound, and claustrophobic atmosphere will not only keep you from falling asleep at the controller, but give you the feeling of actually being there.

The music in *K2* fits the theme of this grim future perfectly, as do the echoing hallways littered with attack droids. The control of the armored suit is perfect, as you can now position yourself (strafe) to nail those intelligent droids hiding in the corners. The new rotating automap located front and center is another big asset. You no longer have to pause and hit the "A" button to find out where you are, then press "B" to cancel and return to the action, only to ask yourself, "Now where was I again?"



The information/status screens shown above can be accessed anytime during the game and are very useful, allowing you to check the status of your suit's temperature, ammunition count, and items inventory. These options can be turned off during gameplay, but I recommend keeping them on at all times. This ain't no walk in the park.



When encountering an enemy, a sonar beeps, indicating how close the enemy is ala *Aliens*. Thusly, you can find cover, and fully unload on the lil' critter with one of the many weapons in your arsenal. Additionally, your suit scans the enemy ahead, does a quick analysis, and gives you info on its weapons, armor, and destructive power! Talk about technical, this is sci-fi gaming at its absolute finest.

If you're into 3-D corridor/neo-futuristic mech games, Sony's got a game that you simply must experience, provided it makes the trip overseas (which is really a no-brainer). If you simply cannot wait, the import version is available now, but buyer beware, there's a lot of text you need to understand, and some speech as well. Either way, K2 is a powerful sequel.

Look for more coverage as soon as a US version crosses our path. -Mr. Goo

湾岸 Dead Heat

R REVIEW



DEVELOPER - PACK IN VIDEO

PUBLISHER - PACK IN VIDEO

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED

AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



MR. GOO
WHAT A WAY TO MEET
CHICKS!



With more than just a passing resemblance to *Ridge Racer*, Pack In Video has just released *Dead Heat* for the Japanese Saturn. Unfortunately, they decided to leave out a few things you'd expect in a decent racer (like great graphics, tight control, and the law of physics), only to add something you wouldn't expect: a date (in a PG sort of way). This poorly programmed "racing game" is simply the shell for the latest of many Japanese dating games. Winning each race allows you to see a low quality video of your selected "co-pilot" getting a tad more friendly. If *Dead Heat* had better control, I might play it just for laughs. But, with games like *Sega Rally* and *High Velocity* on the market, why would I want to? -Mr. Goo



SEGA's SATURN Preview

So much joy...

The Saturn sequel to *Beyond Oasis*, Ancient's *Thor*.

this spring. No U.S. release has yet been announced... Two new elements have been added, Braae and Aere. Yuzo Kashiho, who's last good soundtrack was *Streets of Rage 2*, best deliver some power.

THOR



Lunar Saturn is shaping up to be much more than just a remake. The Saturn version has twice the amount of music, and features new quests. Lunar releases this May in Japan, and I'm quite sure Working Designs has already begun the conversion.

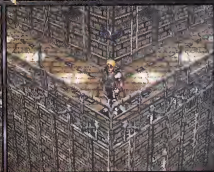
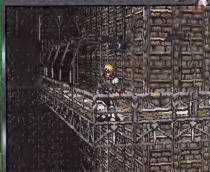
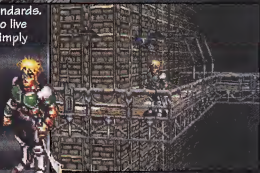


Here's our first look at *Panzer Zwei*'s forest scene. This ultimate sequel has multiple paths and, how you choose actually has an impact on the game's outcome. Fly too much and your dragon's legs will be weak for the tough ground levels, run too much and your wings will not develop enough power for strong flight. This ingenious game design, along with several new views and visuals that far surpass the original, will surely catapult *Panzer 2* to legendary status.

DARK SAVIOR



Climax's *Dark Savior* seems to defy current 3-D standards. The makers of *LandStalker* will deliver this reason to live this spring. In this new 3-D adventure, which you simply have to see to believe, bounty hunter Ryu Ya is marooned on an island prison colony occupied by prisoners he put away. To say the least, they are not happy. At press time, Sega of America had no release date info available on DS, but insured me they would look into the status of a U.S. translation. I'll have more on *Dark Savior* next month.



R REVIEW



DEVELOPER: HUDSON

PUBLISHER: HUDSON

FORMAT: CD

1-2 PLAYERS

DIFFICULTY: EASY!

AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN



NICK ROX



'Tis a miracle! An action game on the FMV-based FX? Yes! The only previous attempt at a semi-sprite-based game on the FX was *Team Innocent* (an otherworldly experience, but I won't go into that) and it flicked grievously with two characters on screen. The 2-D legendary love displayed in Hudson's *Kishin Doji Zenki: Vajura Fight*, however, is pretty much up to anything seen on Saturn or PlayStation, at least technically: You get five or six scrolls, mass enemies, and a fair amount of 32-bitified special effects. Zenki, based on the popular manga and anime series by Tani Kikuhide and Kuroiwa Yoshihiro, involves a 1,200-year-old demon god, Zenki, who's power is controlled by a young girl named Chiaki Enno, the descendant of Zenki's original master. Zenki wants to, well, pretty much kill Chiaki... she controls all his powers. But, of course, he can't kill her if she doesn't empower him. That's the basic storyline of the series, but I don't have nearly enough room to elaborate. On the

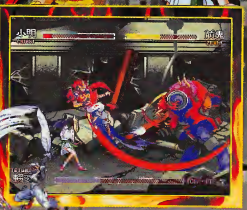


subject of storyline, one of *Zenki's* biggest failings is the total lack of any way to skip the cinema scenes.

Though tortuously short (you can beat the game in about 35 minutes) *Zenki's* great fun while it lasts. You can pick from Zenki or Chiaki, both of whom have numerous moves done with SF and VF motions: tag-taps and fireball motions are both present. You can also double-jump and block. These controls would lend themselves well to a platformer, but *Zenki* is mainly forward-scroll and boss-es.

The graphics and effects are very nice, and the characters are animated fairly well. You'll see up to six scrolls and a very cool line-scrolling, warping effect in the sky of the last stage. *Zenki* doesn't rely very much on shocking effects, but rather on exceedingly fun gameplay and anime-style visuals.

If you're the diehard gamer that needs everything, you need an FX. This and *Team Innocent* are two very good reasons to buy the system, and three great RPG's are coming in the next two months - *Power Dials FX: Boundary Gate*, and *Miraculum*. I'll be back soon with reviews of these three titles.



Nick Rost's IMPORT PLAYSTATION PREVIEWS



The Tale of Popolocrois

Sony's second true RPG after *Beyond the Beyond* is coming this Spring. *Popolocrois* has astounding graphic detail and *Shining Force*-like battles.

Motor Toon Grand Prix 2

Motor Toon Grand Prix, one of the coolest (and most overlooked) first generation 32-bit games is finally getting a sequel! MTGP's game system has been upgraded to include bombs, missiles, turbo boosts, and the devastating "Crazy Mushroom." *Motor Toon 2* is due sometime in Spring; we'll be sure to have more on this one soon!



Jumping Flash! 2

Finally, some shots of *Jumping Flash! 2*! Despite the one on the left being one of the worst screenshots of all time (not our fault!), JF2 looks great and is due in Spring.



Killing Zone

Naxat's hurlin' (yet inexplicably loved by certain persons at GF) Saturn fighter *Battle Monsters* has spawned a sequel on the PS. *KZ* comes out in Spring.



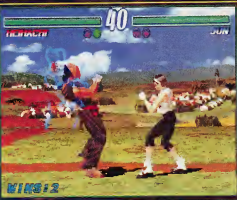
King's Field III

From Software's exploration-heavy and seemingly never-ending RPG series, *King's Field* has yet another rapid sequel coming in June.



Tekken 2

ACTUAL PLAYSTATION SHOTS!
Tekken 2 for the PlayStation is almost here! Due sometime in March, T2 is based on the arcade *Tekken 2* Ver.B, and so it has all 23 characters from the arcade (though it's yet to be determined how you'll select them) plus a new *King of Fighters*-style Team Battle Mode in which both players choose five characters. *Tekken 2*'s looking pretty exact, with the exception of slightly lower floor and spark resolution. I'll have a review of T2 soon!



TALES OF PHANTASIA

R
REVIEW



DEVELOPER - NAMCO
PUBLISHER - NAMCO
FORMAT - 48 MEG CARTRIDGE
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



TAKUHI

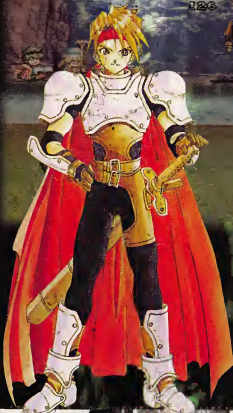
IF I HEAR "ICE TORNADO"
ONE MORE TIME, I'M
GOING TO SLIT MY WRISTS.

It's been a long time in coming (the copyright is from 1994!), but *Tales of Phantasia* is finally here, and is quite possibly the most stunning 16-bit game I've ever seen. As I don't particularly care for shiny, repetitive SGI stuff, this game's only competition in the graphics category comes from Square's *Seiken Densetsu III*. With tons of stunning effects, a great deal of variety, and the beautiful 10 layer parallax backgrounds, I'd give the trophy to *Tales*.

Despite the beautiful graphics, the big concept in *Tales of Phantasia* is actually the voice... This game has 16 megs of voice samples, including an entire theme song. But despite the hype, the 16-megs seems to have amounted to a whopping two minutes of okay quality voice, and turned out to easily be the most forgettable part of *ToP*. I can't believe Namco (paying what must have been 2/3 of the game's entire budget) hired Kaneto Shiozawa, one of Japan's best-known and most famous voice actors, to deliver one 12-second line. You can't even hear it, the music's so loud! But speaking of music, Namco's attention to sound quality really does pay off here, with a long, beautiful soundtrack. To top it all off, the game has an incredibly complex sound mode that lets you play all the tracks, and mess with the pitch, stereo effects, and what not.

You play as Kres, a hip young youth who goes hunting one day and returns to find his entire village and family slaughtered (a trauma he quickly walks off). What the perpetrators really wanted, though, was his amulet, which is the key to freeing a great demon who was sealed away 100 years ago. Eventually, they capture Kres, take the amulet, and free the beast. All that can be done is to send Kres and his friends back to the past, before the demon was sealed away, and all the Mana disappeared from the land, to destroy the evil being for good. Time travel? Mana disappearing from a world? A party of 100-year-old warriors whose descendants must repeat the same task? Why, it's like playing every Square game ever made... *at the same time!*

The game's a bit more innovative in the play mechanics category. While the overhead stuff is more of the same, the battle system is truly something new. You control only Kres (you can give orders to your party members, but not directly manipulate them), who can perform a variety of sword attacks that

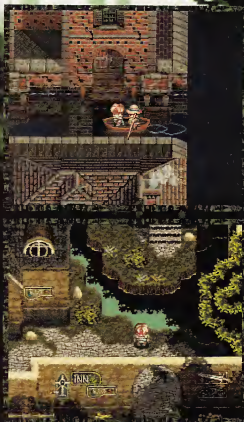




you equip and assign to various button combinations. The control on Kres is great, but your apparently retarded party members have a bad habit of walking right into enemy attacks. Heck, the whole party member system in general was just a bad idea. You can give your party members (who basically only use magic) a battle strategy to follow, but these basically amount to "don't ever cast spells" and "cast spells CONSTANTLY." As a result, your party members either just sit there looking at their feet, or waste your time and their MP with a constant flurry of battle-disrupting spells on enemies Kres could squash with one sword slash.

And, like too many action-RPG's before it, *Tales of Phantasia* suffers from a glut of horribly tedious battle scenes. You get attacked about once every 8 steps, which makes the long, complex dungeons infuriatingly boring. One little wrong turn can easily turn into 20 minutes of mind-numbing battles as you try to retrace your steps. The Holy Bottle item limits the amount of battles you have to face to a mere one every 20 steps, but if you just use that all the time, you won't be strong enough to fight the bosses, and will have to spend many an hour slaughtering to get back up to speed.

Now, I don't mean to stress only the negatives of *Tales of Phantasia*, as this is an incredible game. The graphics are of incredi-



ble quality, full of animation and shading, and feature a LOT of variety. It's hard to believe that this game is "only" 48 megs, when I see all the various locations and battle backgrounds. The dungeons are well designed and full of cool puzzles, and the quest has many non-linear elements. Unfortunately, it's hard to enjoy either feature with the excessive amount of battles.

Clearly, Namco has the power to make an epic RPG. The graphics are there, the sound's there, the quest's there, and the length is definitely there (Waka's at the 30-hour mark). *Tales of Phantasia* wants for nothing: Its only problem is in the excess of tedious battles. I pray that Namco releases this here, with the amount of battles cut by 2/3, for then *Tales of Phantasia* truly would be an epic masterpiece.

-Takuhi



クリス	921	20	ローザ	2
ミント	799	150	ハクバ	
クラウド	1156	125		
アース	573	110		

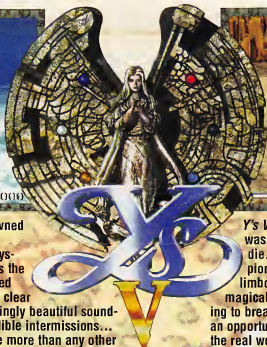
クリス	999	40	クラウド	2
ミント	778	122		
クラウド	655	117		

クリス	343	73	ベリタス	
ミント	335	196		
クラウド	730	95		

石化光線			
クリス	1347	211	バレット
モンテ	1107	164	
クラウド	1236	149	
アース	1267	145	

クリス	129	84	クラウド	2
ミント	1107	154	アース	
クラウド	1034	129		
アース	907	123		





R REVIEW



DEVELOPER - FALCOM
PUBLISHER - FALCOM
FORMAT - 24 MEG. CART.
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - VERY EASY
AVAILABLE - NOW - JAPAN

Anyone who owned one of the first Turbografx-CD systems remembers the day they first tried Y's. The crystal clear voice, the stunningly beautiful soundtrack, the incredible intermissions... It was that game more than any other that represented the birth of the CD era. And now, 4 years later, as most of the other popular RPG series are finally catching up with the CD age, the Y's series has taken a giant step backwards, as Y's V is released exclusively for the Super Famicom.

Although I'm a long way from being able to forgive Falcom for this sacrilege, Y's V is not that bad of a game. Sure, the intermissions are all gone, the voice is totally absent, and the competent soundtrack is mutilated by the Super Famicom's sound hardware, but Adol's newest quest is not without its charms. The backgrounds have some very nice moments, the control has been rerefined, and the quest is vintage Y's... though painfully short.

Y's V is the story of Kefin, a desert city that was destroyed 500 years ago, but refused to die. The magical alchemy that Kefin's ruler pioneered has kept the city in an Y's-like limbo for five centuries. But now that the magical seal that holds the city in place is starting to break down, the current ruler of Kefin sees an opportunity to return Kefin to its proper place in the real world. Unfortunately, the handful of cities that currently exist on the continent of Afroka aren't too thrilled about this, as Kefin's return would mean their destruction. Mixed into the storyline are a kidnapped amnesiac, a missing adventurer, and a 500+ year old magician trying to undo a centuries-old mistake.

As cool as the storyline is, the game's world is actually quite small. Although I'd expect that from an Y's game, I didn't anticipate the ease with which the game could be beat... The game's a total walk-through, with



TAKUHI
NOT TOO BAD, BUT Y'S
DESERVES MUCH BETTER
THAN THIS.





fun but easy dungeons and ridiculously simple bosses, all of which add up to a paltry 8 hour quest. With no intermissions, small bosses, and so few locations, I can't help but wonder where the 2 years of development and 24 megs of memory went.

In *Y's V*, Adol can jump, swing his sword, and hide behind his shield, instead of just running into enemies. Although I miss the traditional *Y's* play mechanics, I must admit that this is an improvement. The magic system was also a cool idea; everywhere you go you'll find "elementals," and by mixing three various elements (earth, fire, light, etc.) you can create new, equipable spells. Unfortunately, the spells (all of which are offensive) are almost totally useless. Few do as much damage as a regular sword slash, and they can't be used on bosses.

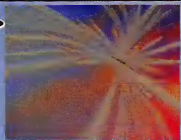
The 4 best original soundtracks in video game history are, in my opinion, *Y's I*, *II*, *III*, and *IV*. As you might imagine, *Y's V* is a crushing disappointment in this area. While the composition of the music is pretty good, the weak sound programming gives the music a whiny tone. I guess all we can do is wait for Falcom to release an arranged soundtrack... but even then, it's just not the same.

All in all, *Y's V* is the disappointment everyone knew it would be. But while it can't possibly live up to the standards of the legendary *Y's* series, it's actually pretty good, if inexcusably short, when judged on its own merits. -Takuhi



TAKUHI'S

ANIME FAN



After an agonizingly long pause between episodes 3 and 4, the most compelling series of 1995 is, alas, over. *Macross Plus* Volume 4 is finally here, and has proven well worth the wait. It all ends here, as Isamu and Guld settle their age old grudge, Myung attempts her escape, and we finally get a glimpse of the ultra-secretive new pilot-less Valkyrie. No, no, wait, actually, that we don't get... A whole hour of set-up since episode 3 and it just zips by in a red blur. But otherwise, a truly worth conclusion, with some very cool surprises.

This episode is the shortest one of the series, just over 30 minutes, but the animation quality is back to the dazzling quality it was in the premiere, despite the cheaper quality animation in the 3rd episode.

If you haven't seen the series yet, you're missing the most exciting *Macross* event since the original *Macross* film... Insane animation quality, some really nice computer graphics, astounding music, and all free of the sugary-sweet sappiness of *Macross 2*, and ultra-cheesiness of *Macross 7*. The story's boldly down-to-earth... No alien armadas invading the Earth, just two ego-driven test pilots fighting for the same woman, and a

computer-programmed singer with some serious mental problems. Mix it all up with the biggest OVA budget ever, and this is not something you'll want to miss.

By Manga Entertainment Volume 4 (35 minutes)

dubbed
- \$14.95/sub-titled -
\$24.95

MACROSS PLUS

GHOST IN THE SHELL

Ghost in the Shell is finally here, open and playing at a theater near you... maybe... Here's the tentative theater list, and what a thrill it is to me. My lovely city right there near the bottom! I hope all you lucky easterners and mid-westerners will drop me a letter and let me know what you thought!

JAN 19-20, 26-28 SW Film Center, Univ. of NEW MEXICO, NM
FEB 2-8 Tower Theater, SALT LAKE CITY, UT
FEB 9-15 Valley Art Theater, SCOTTSDALE/TEMPE/PHOENIX, AZ
FEB 18-22 Tampa Theater, TAMPA, FL
FEB 19-22 Williamsburg Theater, WILLIAMSBURG, VA
FEB 23-29 Images Cinema, WILLIAMSTOWN, MA
MAR 1-7 Academy of Music Cinema, NORTH HAMPTON, MA
MAR 8-14 Carolina Cinema, CHAPEL HILL, NC
MAR 8-14 Colony Theater, RALEIGH, NC
MAR 8-14 Avon Cinema, PROVIDENCE, RI
MAR 8-14 Town Hall, WILTON, NH
MAR 8-21 Key Theater, WASHINGTON DC
MAR 15-21 Charles Theater, BALTIMORE, MD
MAR 22-28 Dobie Theater, AUSTIN, TX
APR 15-18 Academy Theater, HONOLULU, HI
APR ??-?? Nu Art Theater, LOS ANGELES, CA
APR ??-?? UC Theater, BERKELEY, CA
APR ??-?? To Be Announced, SAN FRANCISCO, CA

APR ??-?? To Be Announced, PALO ALTO, CA
APR ??-?? To Be Announced, SAN JOSE, CA
??-??-?? Michigan Theater, ANN ARBOR, MI
??-??-?? Odeon Theater, LANSING, MI
??-??-?? Tivoli, KANSAS CITY, MO
??-??-?? To Be Announced, PITTSBURGH, PA
??-??-?? To Be Announced, CLEVELAND, OH
??-??-?? To Be Announced, MINNEAPOLIS, MN
??-??-?? To Be Announced, BOSTON, MA

Keep in mind that theaters are being added constantly, and the list is subject to change.





INTERNATIONAL

MEMORIES

The most exciting new animated theatrical release in Japan is *Memories*, an omnibus film by Katsuhiro Otomo (famous for *Akira*, *Ryojin-Z*, *Domu*, and short pieces in anime compilations *Neo-Tokyo* and *Robot Carnival*) that hit theaters in December. As one would expect from Otomo, the animation and music (the widely diverse soundtrack features everything from opera to ska) is of top quality, and the stories are sure to turn some heads.

The first piece, (my rough translation: "In Her Thoughts") is a traditional late 21st century space sci-fi piece. Four people returning from a mission in space receive a distress call from the area of space known as the "Universe's Graveyard," and find a mysterious presence waiting in (of all places...) the opera house of a wrecked ship.

The second piece (which I translate as "The Stinkiest Weapon." Really!) is more of a dark comedy. In present day, corporate Japan, a young man is encouraged by a friend to take what he believes is a new kind of cold pill... But what he ends up swallowing is in actuality a new secret weapon his company is developing for the government. The weapon makes his body emit asphyxiating gas that paralyzes all those around him. From here, Otomo's own brand of demented wackiness takes over.

The final film (my translation: "Cannon Town") is a more challenging piece set in a fantastical mobile town filled with giant cannons. The town itself is a mercenary, maintained and operated by its entire population, as it goes from area to area blowing away other warring cities. Everyone in the town is prosperous and satisfied, except for one...

Unfortunately, there's been no word on a US release for *Memories*. The asking price for the rights of new theatrical animated releases is astronomical, and *Memories* is said to be well into the millions. But considering *Akira*'s popularity, I wouldn't be surprised to see this one here in the near future, once its price has cooled down a bit...



Iria (named for the heroine) is based on *Zeiram* (named for the villain), a Japanese live action film from 1991.

Though the film lacked the budget and length necessary to achieve a realistic version of the exotic fantasy world it aimed for, the anime suffers from a shortage of neither time nor funding. In fact, it was actually produced by the same studio that brought us *Macross Plus*, and that's all that needs to be said about the animation. The soundtrack, especially the title theme (which haunts me at night) is also of excellent quality.

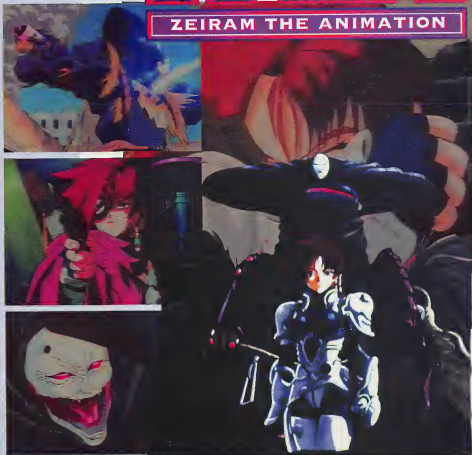
The first 2-episode volume doesn't trouble itself too much with the back story. The basic plot is that apprentice Iria and bounty hunters Gren and Bob (Bob?) are commissioned to salvage a wrecked ship's crew and cargo. Unfortunately, the cargo is Zeiram, a disturbingly twisted biological weapon that has a formless head, and a face where its hat would be. Zeiram doesn't go quietly, and the bounty hunters need every one of their weird gadgets and high-tech weaponry just to escape. In episode 2, Iria crashes to a foreign planet, where she must face Zeiram again, this time alone.

It's hard not to love plucky, beautiful, heavily-armed Iria, and that - more than the spectacular animation, music, and character design - is what has me impatiently waiting for Volume 2 (coming in May, by the way). *Macross Plus* may be over, but at least there's one new series that's really worth caring about.

By U.S. Manga Corps
Volume 1 (2 episodes, 60 minutes), subtitled, available March.

IRIA

ZEIRAM THE ANIMATION



GAMEFAN SPORTS



Chip



Cal Cavalier

CAL'S CORNER

With the impending launch of the Ultra 64, I for one (and probably the only one here at GF, except maybe that human pretzel, Chip) have been wondering, no, dreaming what sports games will be like on Nintendo's new hardware. It's not the polygons, not the colors, not the Reality Immersion™ that has my panties in a bunch, it's the controller. Obviously, there are countless possibilities due to the three different hand positions, but my attention has turned to position 2, where your left thumb uses the pad, your right thumb uses the 3-D stick, and your right index finger presses the trigger button underneath.



Let's think about... tennis, for example. What if your movement was on the pad, and ALL of your swings were controlled by the 3-D stick? Forehands would be a sweep on the right side of the stick, backhands on the left, smashes an upward motion, and lobs a downward motion. Slices, spins, strength of shot, etc. could all be calculated by certain motions of the stick, due to its analog, free-floating nature. For the first time ever, you would determine your shot precisely, instead of the computer deciding. "The ball is on the player's right, so automatically it will be a forehand." Now, how about baseball. Pitching could be completely redefined by this stick... imagine being able to put the EXACT curve and trajectory on the ball you wanted. Like in real life, every pitch would be a challenge. In modern baseball games, you can always get the exact pitch you want by simply holding a directional and hitting the button... no longer. If the 3-D stick is utilized to its potential, I believe sports games will require much more skill, because you will have to spend many hours to master very precise joystick movements to achieve the effect you want. Now, let's hope Nintendo can line up enough developers who are willing to custom-design games for the Ultra controller instead of simply porting/upgrading 32-bit engines!

-Cal Cavalier

"Chip"

Iguana has done this sequel total justice, going beyond the usual port + club better graphics = next-gen. *QB Club* has a ton of impressive camera angles, plays better than anything out there, once you get the timing down on the passing, and is surrounded by quality sound, animation, and gameplay, easily the best 32-bit football game thus far, even without the actual players.

G	C	P	A	O	98
9	9	9	9	7	

VIEWPOINTS

"Cal Cavalier"

Iguana has once again proven it's in the sports big leagues. *QB Club '96* fully lived up to my expectations with all the camera angles I could possibly want, smooth gameplay (except for a slightly quirky, but very usable passing mechanism), real players and teams, and amazing graphics all around. This game goes head-to-head with *NFL GameDay* and takes it into overtime. My biggest gripe is that there are no actual players in this game's historical simulation mode, just the current roster... it's just not the same without Bradshaw and Staubach.

G	C	P	A	O	94
8	8	8	8	7	



QUARTERBACK CLUB '96
Saturn
Iguana

GameFan Sports Previews

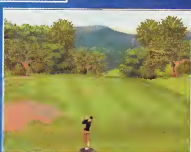
actua (Saturn)
SOCCER

It might be named either *Actua* or *VR Soccer*, but this Gremlin Graphics (of *Loaded* game) production is virtually guaranteed to be the best 32-bit soccer game yet. Like any good 32-bit modern sports game should, this one has a vast array of camera angles. You can (in real-time, not in "steps") shift the height and rotation of the camera angle, creating an amazing number of different views. From the deep, controllable gameplay to even the entertaining announcer, this one should be a winner.



VR Golf (PlayStation)

Interplay's *VR* line was well worth the wait, with two glitening new games for us to preview. *VR Golf* looks like it could be an astonishing piece of work, because all the graphics are rendered on the fly, not FMV. You can watch a fly-by of the hole, or walk through with the ability to change height/camera angle! This will definitely be one to watch. We'll have a review soon.



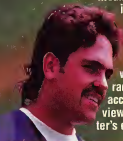


KID OAKLAND vs BOSTON RED SOX			
PLAYERS	OPS	OPS	OPS
1. M. J. Martinez	1.0	1.0	1.0
2. J. Martinez	1.0	1.0	1.0
3. J. Martinez	1.0	1.0	1.0
4. J. Martinez	1.0	1.0	1.0
5. J. Martinez	1.0	1.0	1.0
6. J. Martinez	1.0	1.0	1.0
7. J. Martinez	1.0	1.0	1.0
8. J. Martinez	1.0	1.0	1.0
9. J. Martinez	1.0	1.0	1.0
10. J. Martinez	1.0	1.0	1.0



Konami's back at it with another texture-mapped polygon power sports game, *Bottom of the 9th*. Looking like it should continue the tradition of excellence established with *In The Zone*, *Bottom of the 9th* is just a very solid baseball game with a few new play mechanics, but otherwise it's everything you'd expect from 32-bit baseball.

The gameplay is fairly standard except for the new batter/pitcher window and mechanics. At bat, you can precisely pinpoint the exact height and placement of your swing, an element sorely missing from other baseball games. On the mound,



instead of holding in a general direction to add curve, go inside, throw low, etc., you move the catcher's glove to the exact place you wish to throw the ball. These radical changes in gameplay are accommodated by a split-screen view where you can see from the batter's eyes or the pitcher's eyes.

BOTTOM OF THE 9TH

There aren't any fancy multi camera views, etc. but the standard perspective flows very well and the polygons look great. Our preview copy had a semi-functional announcer (somehow Sammy Sosa made every defensive play), but once it's final, the voice should be pretty good.



Bottom of the 9th includes the expected exhibition and season modes, as well as an intriguing training mode where you can work on your swing, offense, defense, etc. We'll have more details on the training mode in the review because it wasn't active in our preview copy.

The final analysis for the game will wait for when the game is, of course, done, but one negative point I can safely bring up now: *Bottom of the 9th* has the official players license but NOT the teams license, so the team names are fake. The stadiums are also fake... "Greenway" Park might sound like a clone of Fenway Park, but there's no Green Monster. Oh well... gameplay's most important, and Konami is on the way to a sterling 32-bit track record, let's hope they keep up the good work.

-Cal Cavalier

GAMEFAN SPORTS



PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - KONAMI

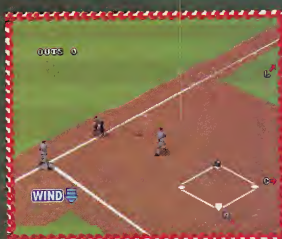
PUBLISHER - KONAMI

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - MARCH



CAL CAVALIER
ANOTHER FINE POLYGON
SPORTS GAME FROM KONAMI.



NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB

GAMEFAN
SPORTS



REVIEW

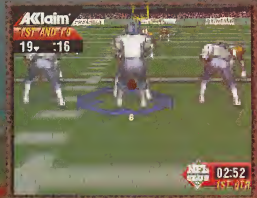


SEGA SATURN

- DEVELOPER - IGUANA
- PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-4
- DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
- AVAILABLE - FEBRUARY



CAL CAVALIER
SATURN FINALLY HAS A
MATCH FOR NFL GAMEDAY!



The Super Bowl's over by now (as I am writing, the Cowboys and Steelers just locked up the conference championships - guess I was 1 for 2 with the predictions), and I was pretty certain that after the big game was over I'd have *NFL Gameday*, and *NFL Gameday* only to relive one of the greatest seasons ever. That was a couple of days ago. Last night, Chip handed me a copy of the latest masterpiece from Iguana. Unbelievable. Without question, *Gameday* rules the PlayStation, but now Saturn owners have not just their first football game, but an extraordinarily good football game.

QB Club does almost everything right. This game just overflows with 32-bit power, in every category. The graphics are pretty darn near heart-stopping... amazing CG intro, lots of wonderful still pictures such as stadium shots with tons of fans flare, silky more-than-enoughs animation, the works. Some 32-bit sports games bog down with too many (unplayable) camera angles, but not *QB Club*. The game has nine different camera views which basically change your distance from the field, and eight different directional choices, which rotate the camera around from the selected distance. Whether you'd rather be watching from the stands, coaching from the sidelines, staring down the gridiron from the quarterback's eyes, or scoping it all out from the Goodyear Blimp, you can do it. I literally can not think of a single way to view football in real life that isn't represented in this spectacular game.

I do have one teeny weeny gripe however. The ability to choose from only three plays in the standard *Madden* play-call

ing system is tired, and in a head-to-head game, allows the other player to narrow down which play you're calling. Think about it: on 3rd and long, if you choose a play from a three-choice window which contains two running options, the opponent will know with complete certainty the exact passing play you will call. Am I being anal? Hey, I am anal! Ugly too!

That aside, *QB Club* is still a great-playing football game with responsive control, an intuitive down-field passing call-out scheme, and of course the usual complement of pre-season, season, and playoff modes. *QB Club* still offers the traditional simulation mode where you can re-enact one of 50 historical game situations. However, Iguana for whatever reason didn't see fit to include all the real players from the historical squads. I took Dallas into the fourth quarter of Super Bowl XIII expecting to make Roger Staubach change history, but lo and behold, who is leading my team but Troy Aikman. Real old players would have been a nice touch, but it certainly wasn't essential.

You may remember that I was more than a little fond of 32X *QB Club* (it was my favorite football game ever, since *Gameday* didn't exist at the time), so my expectations were obviously high for the true 32-bit version... Iguana hasn't disappointed me; in fact, I am pretty damn shocked. The Super Bowl of *Gameday* vs. *QB Club* would be tough to call, but if you don't really have to go there (i.e. you only own a Saturn), then this game is as necessary an addition to your sports collection as there has ever been. -Cal Cavalier





CAMERA ANGLES - nine to choose from!



ACTION CAM



BLIMP CAM



COACH CAM



COWIE CAM



CROWD CAM



END ZONE CAM



SHOULDER CAM



SUPER PASS CAM



TV CAM





PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - IIS.COM

PUBLISHER - JES GORDON

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-4

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - MARCH



Duffers will be quite pleased with the addition of, not one, but two golf games to the PlayStation library in the coming months. While *VR Golf* looks unequivocally superior to U.S. Gold's offering, *World Cup Golf* should be a fine game with a never-before-seen-in-video-games course: the Dorado Beach course in Puerto Rico.

World Cup is an FMV-based game. It may not be as impressive as the on-the-fly-rendering of *VR*, but there are some very slick fly-bys of the holes and generally clean graphics. The course is extremely detailed and, while you can't self-scroll through the course, there are many useful utilities to check the flag placement, the wind, the projected trajectory/landing of the ball, etc.

The gameplay is very sharp and there are lots of tournament options, skins games, the works.

WORLD CUP

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GOLF

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placement.

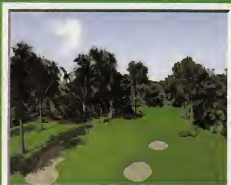


DORADO BEACH

to keep you busy. The control is right on, featuring all the little nuances necessary for a golf game: feet placement, exact placement of swing on the ball, and much more. The music and sound effects are also top-notch, featuring the most distinctive bird chirps ever (which are, as you know, crucial for a golf game).

It's hard to create a golf game that separates itself from the pack, and the rendering on the fly is a big advantage for VR. We'll see how polished *World Cup* is when it's done, but in any case this will be a good golf game...we'll find out if it's great.

-Cal Cavalier





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'NFL GAM
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standard i
football game
The butterfly
are churning a
you take th
field with th
world's bes
This is th
NFL, wher
guys lik
Z o r i c h
Greene, Whit
and Sea
describe the wor
hit. PSX \$5



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replids are on the
ar robotic enemies
eature for tremen-
\$56



* **PRIMA RAGE** Seven imprisoned gods are set loose from suspended animation after a meteor or strike Earth in the near future. Humans survive, but most technology is wiped out. PSX \$59.95



GENESIS



PLAYSTATION

- Cliff Flight Sim Stick
- Control Steering Wheel
- Control Pad Dlx
- Control Steering Wheel

PLAYSTATION SYSTEM

- X Controller
- X Combat Cable
- X Game Gun
- X MEMORY CARD
- X Mouse with Pad
- X Multi-Tap
- X Golf
- X Decathlon
- X Baseball '96
- X Guest 2: 11th Hour
- X Train
- X Armath

WILE WARRIOR: F-111



SATURN
 Saturn Arcade Racer
 SATURN System
 Saturn Stunner Gun
 D Baseball 95
 H Guest 2: 11th Hour
 r Combat
 LIEN TRILOGY
 Lazing Dragons
 ReinDead 13
 asper
 CENTER RING BOXING
 kWorks Knight 2
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 ascent 2
 egions Lair 2
 urgeons & Dragons
 urthworm Jim 2
 AFK Intermission 1 Soccer
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Space Ace	\$52	X Men 2	\$32	Yoshis Island Rpg Mario 2	\$12					

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souls and swords eternally retold..."*



P PREVIEW

SOUL EDGE



ARCADE

DEVELOPER: NAMCO

PUBLISHER: NAMCO

HARDWARE: SYSTEM 11

1-2 PLAYERS

DIFFICULTY: VARIABLE

OUT IN ARCADES NOW



NICK ROX

To say that *Soul Edge* is the best-looking 3-D game of all time would be an understatement. 3-D has gotten pretty crazed recently to say the least, and I don't toss this phrase about willy-nilly. These screen shots do not convey the majesty of the



game. "Oh, great," you may be thinking, "I'll never be able to play something this good at home." Think again. *Soul Edge* runs on Namco's System 11, a low-cost arcade system which uses Sony's PlayStation hardware. Yes, what you're seeing is essentially a PlayStation game, though Namco has yet to announce when *Soul Edge* will be released in the home.

Almost more so than the visuals, *Soul Edge*'s ambience and instantly perceptible coolness draw you into the game. First of all, *Soul Edge* is one of the few fighting games with an interesting storyline: It is the 15th century. Eight warriors around the globe are competing to win the *Soul Edge*, a weapon that absorbs the souls of those it kills, drawing upon the dead warriors' power to increase the strength of the weapon. The real question, however, is the *Soul Edge* a curse? Does it enslave its owner? Only by defeating the last boss Cervantes will you learn the shocking truth.

These are some *cool* characters, but the backgrounds do everything except slap you in the face to take your attention off the fight. The amount of detail in them just isn't right: Birds lift around, alighting on rooftops, ghosts dart in and out of bamboo stalks, leaves blow around the combatants' feet, lanterns sway in the breeze, burning embers and logs fall from the ceiling, towers crumble, and shadows pass over the sun, realistically darkening the scene gradually, to name a scant few of the almighty effects in *Soul Edge*. All of this glory occurs during rapid changes from morning, to evening, to night... About thirty times faster than reality, but very cool nonetheless. To coincide with each time of day the light-source also completely changes. For instance, at night, torches and braziers light up, throwing patches of ultra-realistic light and shadow. Certain moves and 10-hit combos will create thunder and lightning which also authentically light up opponents. To achieve this level of grandeur on the PS, Namco had to drop the frame rate to 30 frames per second, half that of *Tekken* and *Tekken 2*. This makes very little difference, however - most home games run at 30fps or lower. The mind-rending motion blur which accompanies each weapon slash and other effects (not to mention the superb gameplay) will make you blind to frame rates, believe me.

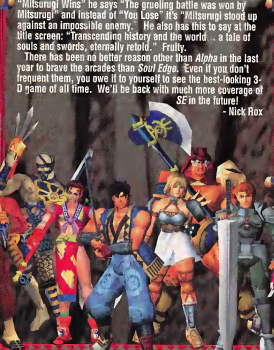
The gameplay is based on *Tekken*, with four buttons: Vertical Attack, Horizontal Attack, Kick and... Block. Yes, the instant death that is the block button has been adopted by Namco. I don't have the huge problem that some do with a guard button, but why did Namco waste an attack button on block? One of the reasons I love *Tekken* and *Tekken 2* so much is the familiar pull-back-to-defend. Ah well, *Soul Edge* is guaranteed to be huge in Japan... they LOVE their block buttons. Though we only had a short while to play *Soul Edge* at the Namco offices, I got a pretty good feel for the game system. Unfortunately, SE isn't as juggle-heavy as the *Tekken* series. In fact SE feels quite a bit like *Virtua Fighter*, with mostly pre-set combos. Of course, Namco could only give us eight moves per character at this time, so I'm probably missing a lot. One interesting gameplay innovation is the gauge beneath your life bar: this is the strength of your weapon, and it decreases when you block. If it goes all the way down, you'll lose your weapon, which can't be regained. While weaponless (or "Lost of Weapon"), you can do a few *Tekken*-style juggle combos, but if your weapon breaks, you're pretty much screwed.

The sound is second only to the graphics. If you've heard *Skeleton Warriors*, then you know what impossible-to-describe-with-mere-words game music sounds like. *Soul Edge*'s tunes are on this level. Totally original, SE music is mostly orchestral, with perfectly-sampled choirs. The most shocking thing about the music, however, is the fact that it's PCM, and that it's from Namco's outdated sound system that's been used in every game since *Ridge Racer*. The speech for the characters is excellent, but the entire aural

experience is marred by a very odd announcement. Instead of "Mitsurugi Wins" he says "The grooving battle was won by Mitsurugi" and instead of "You Lose" it's "Mitsurugi stood up against an impossible enemy. He also has this to say at the title screen: "Transcending history and the world... a tale of souls and swords, eternally retold." Fruity.

There has been a better reason other than *Alpha* in the last year to brave the arcades than *Soul Edge*. Even if you don't frequent them, you owe it to yourself to see the best-looking 3-D game of all time. We'll be back with much more coverage of SE in the future!

- Nick Rox



NIGHTMARES DO COME TRUE



How long can you go without sleep? Because if you even blink, Baron Dark's diabolical dream will annihilate your world. And the human race is looking to you to reclaim the powerful Lightstar Crystal. Not to mention his death squad of Skeleton Warriors™.



These guys don't have a forgiving bone in their bodies, so with over 20 levels of gruesome 3-D gamage, you may lose your mind in a sleepless hell. But

if you're defeated, it's a sure bet you'll be sleeping with the enemy. For eternity.

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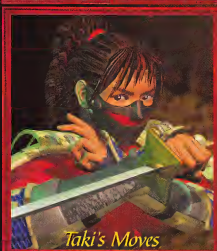
SEGA SATURN

Use official assets your
favorite Sega Saturn game
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Taki



Taki's Moves

Sotobatsu - A, A, A
 Saseibatsu - B, B, B
 Samrenchu - K, K, K
 TENCHU - →K
 Gekichu - ↓K, K
 Shippu Guruma - ↓↘→B
 Nincho - ↵A
 Makatsuha - →→K



Taki is a Kunoichi, or female Ninja, who wields a short Ninken. Taki's attacks are very fast and she can jump higher and backstep/run quicker than any other character. In one of her throws she grabs you from behind, slits your throat and whispers "Kiena" or "Cease to exist" in your ear!



Mitsurugi



Heishiro Mitsurugi, the generic Ryu character, wields a long Nihontoh. He has several moves which involve lifting up the enemy, but you can't juggle them afterwards... lame. He flips over your head and slices down your back lengthwise as one of his throws.



Mitsurugi's Moves

Toniogake - A, A, A
 Kakegakura - A, A, B
 Utsugakura - →→B
 Oborogakura - A+B
 Kaza'ana - →B
 Inabokari - ↓K, B
 Sumemutsuji - ↵A
 Homuraboe - →→A+B



Rock

Rock is a giant American who uses a huge battleaxe as his weapon. Sure, an American barbarian with an axe before America existed... no problem!



Rock's Moves

Typhoon Axe - A, A, B
 Rock Crusher - B, B, B
 Cyclone Axe - ↵A
 Axe Volcano - ↵B
 Rock Knee - →K
 Shoulder Tackle - →→K
 Tornado Axe - →A, A, A
 Tornado Spike - →→A+B



Siegfried

Siegfried is a 16-year-old German knight. He uses a massive Zweihander, or two-handed sword. This weapon gives him the longest reach in the game.



Siegfried's Moves

Slash Cross - A, A, B
 Armor Breaker - B, B, B
 Buster Grounder - B, ↵A
 Bee-sting Strike - →B
 Fatal Drive - ↵↵B, B
 Flying Edge - →→A+B
 Quick Spin-Slash - →A
 Up-Toss - ↵A+G





Li Long



Li Long hails from China and wields bladed Nunchaku. The most impressive thing about him is his raft stage... and hey! You can actually fall into the water, unlike VF2.



Li Long's Moves

Gekirin - A, A, A
Enga - B, B, B
Renfuu - K, ↓K
Sajin - K, ↓K
Senmetsu - A+B
Honshuu - ←A
Gekiho - →B
Fuuso - ↙A



Sophitia

Sophitia is a priestess at the Temple of Hephaestus in Greece. She uses a buckler and short sword that's inscribed "Warrior This Beautiful." In one of her throws she kneels you in the crotch and says "Forgive me."



Sophitia's Moves

Slide Angel Kick - A, A, K
Slide Under Kick - A, A, ↓K
Stardust Splash - B, B, B
Reverse Mirage - ←A
Upper Heaven - ↓B
Jumping Angel Kick - ↑K
Tornado Low Kick - ↙K
Angel Strike - ↓↘↗B





Voldo

Voldo is a blind, deaf, and mute warrior from Italy. How he fights is a mystery, as is his bizarre middle-eastern weapon: the Qatar.



Voldo's Moves

Stamped Shredder - B, B
Mute Slasher - A, B, A
Rat Chase - ↓A, A, A
Ecstasy - ↓B
Praying Mantis - A+B
Gate Opener - →→A+B
Demon Elbow - →→B
Death Rose - A+K



Seung Mina

Seung Mina, at 16, is the Ellis of the game, with a high-pitched voice and an ultra-unclothed appearance. She hails from Korea and uses a halberd.



Seung Mina's Moves

Renga Shippujin - A, A, A
Haiten Danshujin - B, B, B
Soga Danshujin - B, B, ↓A
Senjin Funsagi - A+B
Dangeki Batusagi - ←B, ↓A+B
Enbu Toshuu - B+K
Kaitenshuu - →→K
Tenshizangeki - ↗A

We'll be back
with more
nutritious,
delicious Soul
Edge soon!



P PREVIEW



ARCADE

DEVELOPER: CAPCOM

PUBLISHER: CAPCOM

HARDWARE: CPS II

1-2 PLAYERS

DIFFICULTY: ADJ.

OUT NOW IN ARCADES



SLASHER QUAN

19XX

THE WAR AGAINST DESTINY

After many years on the shelf, Capcom's WWII series (1941/2/3) has a sequel, 19XX. This futuristic, vertical CPS II shooter starts off with a few "empty blue sky" backgrounds, but after several levels it becomes a wonderful excursion in gorgeous, parallax backgrounds, colossal mechanized enemies, and endless bullet showers.

19XX is a two-player simul game with little to no slowdown and the most nonstop 2-D action since *Raiden II*. You can choose from three exciting crafts, each with a different size and speed. This game is a monster in the power-ups department - there are many different weapons such as multi-directional, an intense laser, homing missiles, and more. My only complaint about the gameplay is that there are only two buttons, shoot and bomb. WHERE did the barrel roll go?



My favorite aspect to 19XX is how, in the mid to later levels, each level is literally 4 or 5 times better than the previous one in terms of backgrounds, difficulty, and size of bosses - there are several bosses so amazing, they could have been the end bosses. (This is one of those games that "fools" you into thinking you've beaten it.) There are some fairly astonishing effects, including a scene where a lighted bridge scales out of the darkness (despite CPS II's inability to do hardware scaling). It was a shame *Eco Fighters* was never released in the U.S. (the swivel controller was a miracle of play control design, by the way), so hopefully 19XX will not be overlooked in the midst of Capcom's powerful '96 arcade line-up. -Slasher Quan



P PREVIEW



ARCADE

DEVELOPER: CAPCOM

PUBLISHER: CAPCOM

HARDWARE: CPS II

1-2 PLAYERS

DIFFICULTY: ADJ.

OUT NOW IN ARCADES



NICK ROX



many of their recent arcade releases, Capcom has removed over 50% of the game's voices for the American market. "Bass, Mega Man, and Proto Man all announced the names of their attacks and had little quotes in the Japanese version that are now gone.

The *Power Battle* is basically a one-play game. You'll beat it in one or two credits and it's kinda fun with a friend. C'mon Capcom, it's time for ol' *Mega Man* to go 32-bit. -Nick Rox



One looks at *Mega Man the Power Battle* and just has to wonder "Why?" Capcom obviously went to great lengths to make this game look, control and sound great, but one important feature was left out: gameplay.

This isn't *Mega Man* as you know him. No intricate platforming joy-levels, and almost no strategy in picking different weapons. *MM:TPB* is the *Alien Soldier* of the arcades, consisting only of bosses. Imagine the unending bliss that can be yours by choosing *Mega Man*, the mysterious *Proto Man* or *Bass*,

the newcomer from *Mega Man 7*, and killing many, many bosses! YEAH! And *The Power Battle* keeps those quarters comin' in... there are three separate paths you can take to Dr. Wily! Heaven for you!

The saddest thing, however, is that the graphics are gorgeous, and the music is beyond belief. All of the tunes are from previous *Mega Man* games, and Capcom even put in the theme from the *Ghosts 'n Ghouls* series for pure nostalgia fun time. As with



MEGA MAN THE POWER BATTLE

Dungeons & Dragons

SHADOW OVER MYSTARA

P
PREVIEW



ARCADE

DEVELOPER: CAPCOM

PUBLISHER: CAPCOM

HARDWARE: CPS II

1-2 PLAYERS

DIFFICULTY: ADJ.

OUT NOW IN ARCADES

Many, many video game conversions of *Dungeons & Dragons* have been attempted throughout the 17-year history of video games, but in my opinion, Capcom's *D&D: Tower of Doom* coin-op stood 22 hands higher than all the rest. It was the perfect blend of action video game and *D&D* rules. On one hand, you had exquisite Capcom artwork, better-than-*Warriors of Fate* gameplay, and *Street Fighter*-type joystick motion special moves. On the other hand, you had all the *D&D* rules which actually ENHANCED the game in a big way instead of restricting it: a real plot with dialogue, multiple paths, different characters with their own abilities, and endless monsters to battle, each



with their own attacks, breath weapons, and specific vulnerabilities straight from the *D&D* world.

The sequel, *Shadow Over Mystara*, uses the engine from *Tower of Doom*, but the game is greatly expanded in all areas. Added to the cleric, fighter, elf, and magic-user character classes are the dwarf and the thief (the game is still four-player simul). Another exciting bonus feature is the option of two different, redrawn costumes for each character (not just color palette swaps). (Side note: we are all PRAYING that *SF III* will include this feature!) The new characters are just like their *D&D* counterparts: the dwarf is a stocky, brave-hearted warrior who fights like a madman, and the dexterous thief can pick locks and detect/disarm traps.

Mystara plays a lot like the first game, but it is much longer (20 levels total), and offers even more paths. You could probably replay the game three or four times before seeing everything! The gameplay is also much deeper than before. The first game had limited combos, but *Mystara* has many long, eight-hit ground and juggle combos where you can chain buttons together and two-in-one into dashing special moves. *D&D* was very early when we previewed it so we will have to update you with more details when the game is done.

-Slasher Quan



SLASHER QUAN

ALL THE MAJESTY OF TOWER OF DOOM PLUS TWO NEW FIGHTERS, TRUE COMBOS AND A LENGTHIER QUEST!



T2 The Ride Continues...



Sooo cool we decided to run it again...

Last month's E-Fan gave you, the privileged reader, a brief look into what could possibly be the most exciting state-of-the-art, 3-dimensional adventure ever experienced live and on film. This time, Entertainment Fan has dug deeper, pressed harder, and probably used up way too many favors to bring forth the facts on Universal Studios' newest attraction, *Terminator 2 - 3-D: Battle Across Time*. In this issue we're going to take you for a "sneak preview" and an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at this amazing project while we gaze upon never-before-seen photos of superstar Arnold Schwarzenegger and award-winning director James Cameron. And finally, stay tuned for next month's issue and learn how you and your family (up to a total of four people) can win an all-expense paid trip to Universal Studios Florida where you will join Arnold Schwarzenegger and James Cameron at the World Premiere of *Terminator 2 - 3-D: Battle Across Time*. See you in Orlando!

THE ATTRACTION

* The 3-D film utilized in the attraction is approximately 10 minutes long and was directed by *Terminator* creator and director James Cameron.

* The 10 minute film features all new footage shot exclusively for the *Terminator 2 - 3-D* attraction. Production took place in a deserted steel mill in Fontana, California, taking over two weeks of all-night shooting.

* Computer graphics house Digital Domain, whose special effects work can be seen in *Jurassic Park* and *Apollo 13*, created all of the digital composite imagery in the film.

THE FILM PROJECTION SYSTEM

* Three-dimensional images are projected on three separate screens, in a way never seen before, surrounding guests with 180

degrees of in-your-face-excitement.

* Each of the three projection screens located within the attraction measure 23-feet high by 50-feet long.

* Six fully-automated 70mm film projectors are required to create the 3-D images that will reach off the screen and into the audience.

THE AUDIO SYSTEM

* The *Terminator 2 - 3-D* attraction features a state-of-the-art sound system created by Soundelux that pumps a total of 45,620 watts through 141 speakers. It is the most technically advanced system in the world and serves as a showplace for audiophiles across the globe.

* All processing gear for the attraction's audio systems are found within one master computer system. All connections and configurations are made on-screen utilizing computer software that has never been seen before.

* The audio computer system allows audio engineers to modify and construct new audio configurations simply by drawing them on a computer screen instead of the time-consuming re-wiring required by a conventional system.

THE T2-3-D CINEBOTIC FIGURES

* Originally, Universal Studios planned to feature in the attraction the T-800 chrome endoskeletons seen in the *Terminator 2* motion picture. However, after consulting with director James Cameron, they discovered that the T-800's come from the future (around 2029) and therefore could not exist in the attraction in the present day. As a result, Cameron designed, exclusively for this attraction, the T-70 robot, a totally new, more primitive series of the mechanical soldier.

Schwarzenegger and Furlong escaping danger once again.



Arnold and Cameron kickin' back, during their rigorous shooting schedule.



▶ A bit of behind the scenes movie magic.



He said he'd be back.



Alas, poor Yorick, I knew him well.



Say hello to my little friend.



Explosions! Explosions! Explosions!





Welcome to the March 1996 edition of Other Stuff. This month's edition is home to some of the craziest info we've ever uncovered.

Brace yourselves...

Umm...I'll take ~~that~~ one, and ~~that~~ one, and...

The award for "Schizophrenic Video Game Company of the Year" has to go to Sega. Currently there are 4 separate **64-bit proposals** rumored to be in development at Sega. One option has Sega licensing Matsushita's (gesundheit) 64-bit technology later this year and marketing a stand-alone M2 game/DVD player under the Sega brand name. Next, we see the newly formed SegaSoft (see related story below) developing software for not only the Saturn and PC's, but also the PlayStation, M2, and yes, perhaps even the Ultra 64 as well. 64-bit solution #3 takes us to sunny Florida, home of the Lockheed Martin Corporation (LMC). This military defense contractor assisted in the design of Sega's arcade Model 1 (*Virtua Racing*, VF), Model 2 (*Daytona*, VF2, *Sega Rally*, *Virtual On*), and the upcoming polygon powerhouse, Model 3 (VF3, *Daytona 2*) arcade boards. We hear Sega has commissioned the Lockheed Martin Corporation to design a home console based around LMC's REAL/3-D 100 PC graphic accelerator chipset (see related story in this issue's Random Access) called the "Pluto" by LMC insiders. Last but not least, we travel back to Japan, where Sega's brightest in-house engineers are hard at work on a project known internally as the "MotorMorph." Sega's new hardware project-of-the-month is a 64-bit cartridge-based home console. Not much is known about the MotorMorph except that if given the green light, it will hit developers' greedy little hands sometime

in 1997 and will be released in Japan in 1998. O.K....

Question: Which one of these 4 projects is getting Sega's full attention? Answer: All of them. It seems as though Sega has learned a trick or two from Nintendo, who worked on 3 simultaneous hardware projects (16-bit SNES CD, 32-bit SNES/PlayStation CD and Ultra 64) before picking the best one (Ultra 64) to lead

their next-generation assault. Which, if any, will be the Saturn's successor? We'll let you know as the info and rumors keep coming in.

Everybody loves it.

Matsushita better name its 64-bit game machine the "Infatuation Multiplayer 2" because it seems as though every Tom, Dick, and Harry (except Nintendo, of course) is closely scrutinizing Matsushita's newborn baby. Believe it or not, Sony (yes, the one and only) is rumored to be releasing an M2/DVD combo unit in late '96. To those of you doubting this little tidbit of hot info, keep in mind the ongoing DVD (Digital Video Disc) saga. Early in 1995, Matsushita and Toshiba supported the "SD" (Super Density) DVD format, while on the other side, Sony and Phillips had their own version of the DVD called the MMCDD (multi-media compact disc). In August 1995, all this changed. Sony and Matsushita agreed to jointly develop a single format which combined the virtues of both the SD and MMCDD formats. What the hell does this have to do with video games? Well, considering Matsushita already announced that they will release an M2/DVD combo unit, and all Sony DVD players would have to use the same format Matsushita is using anyway, the thought of a Sony licensed M2 unit doesn't sound so far-fetched after all. And besides, Sony isn't exactly new to the business of supporting two competing formats (in this case the 32-bit PlayStation and the 64-bit Sony M2 combi-player). Don't forget, they not only manufacture and sell Beta VCR's but VHS VCR's as well. Ask me again about the possibility of a Sony M2 console... And there you have it, a case where one and one equals M2.

Polygons??? I'll show you polygons!!!

Well, we're about 2 weeks away from the big AOU arcade show in Japan where Sega is set to make a big splash with their newest coin-op games: *Virtua Fighter 3*, *Daytona 2*, and possibly even *Virtua Cop 2*. All three will be powered by Sega's blazing new Model 3 arcade board (designed by the 3D specialist, LMC). This in itself may not sound all that exciting, but from what we hear, Sega's white hot Model 3 "powerware" can create real-time visual gymnastics that could bring even the most seasoned gamer to his/her knees. The Model 3 hardware is rumored to be able to produce over 1 million anti-aliased polygons per second on the fly, and is said to be the most powerful video game architecture of all time!!! Bring it on baby, bring it on! Of the three titles, *Daytona 2* will be released first (sometime in march 1996).

Capcom's not-so-big secret

If the unveiling of the new Model 3 games doesn't give the 1996 AOU show the status of "Best arcade show of all time" then maybe THIS will do the trick. Capcom will likely use its coin-op exhibition to showcase a "new fighting game." Maybe you've heard of it already... we've heard it'll be called *Street Fighter III*. This long, long awaited sequel to the ludicrously successful *SF II* is a make-or-break title for Capcom. Reportedly set for release in June '96, *SF III*'s designers (led by the legendary Akira Nishitani) claim that their latest creation can command the title of "best fighting game of all time" effortlessly. With more than 3 years of development time and a revolutionary new combo system (designed by Nishitani himself) *SF III*'s release is easily as significant as the Ultra 64, if not more so. As a matter of fact, the two seem like a match made in heaven... Hmmm, stay tuned...

Attention K-mart shoppers!!!

Sega has a little present for those foolish hard-core gamers (us) who coughed up 400 bills for a Saturn. It's rumored that on the 1st anniversary of the Saturn (May 11, 1996), Sega will announce at the E3 show that they will slash the Saturn's retail down to a "SAY WHAT" price of \$199. Since Saturns supposedly cost *more* than that to manufacture, Sega's either found a new way to produce the hardware more affordably, or

they're willing to do anything to gain a huge market share...

More Sega arcade games on the way

Speaking of the E3, Sega (there's that name again) plans on having a killer Saturn lineup at this year's E3 video game exhibition. Sega's E3 line-up for the Saturn is rumored to include: *Sonic 3-0*, *Indy 500*, *Virtua Cop 2*, *Fighting Vipers*, *Virtual On*, and *Manx TT*. Sony's big PlayStation games at the E3 will include: *Tekken 2*, *Alpine Racer*, *Ridge Racer Revolution*, *Soul Edge*, *Toshinden 2*, *Jumping Flash 2*, *Quake*, *Castlemania: the Bloodletting*, *Rock 'N Roll Racing 2*, and last but not least a top secret action/platform game called *Willa Wombat*. Sony is said to be publishing this game and Naughty Dog is doing the programming work. Matsushita's Panasonic brand is expected to make a big splash with the world premiere of the M2 hardware and software. Nintendo's big SNES game will be the long awaited *32-meg Super Kid Icarus*. Nintendo also plans on showing... uhh... some other "stuff" as well (heh heh)... Stay tuned.

P.S. No. 1 love you

Could the long, mutually prosperous exclusive relationship between Square and Nintendo be coming to an end soon? According to a weekly Japanese comic magazine, Square Co. may begin to strut their stuff over at Sony. Of course, this rumor has yet to be confirmed by either the mainstream business press or any Japanese video game magazines, so the odds are slim indeed. Still, what if?

What? More Sega info???

We're not quite done with Sega yet. This last tidbit of info concerns SegaSoft. A few months ago Sega "quietly" announced SegaSoft - a software publishing division based at SOA who would make games for the Saturn, PC's, and what-not. Why the hush puppies? Well, it seems as though the "what-not" may turn out to include none other than the PlayStation, M2 and, believe it or not, possibly even the Ultra 64. From what we hear, little 'o' SegaSoft has been keeping themselves busy these days... They're rumored to be working on one racing game and one fighting game for competitors' 64-bit platforms.

Now I'm done. See you next month.

ULTRA SOMETHING

The 1/16/1996 issue of "Famitsu Tsushin" has comments from a number of Japan's famous video game designers about their predictions for '96, especially in relation to the Ultra-64.

Some of the comments contradicted previous reports that we'll be seeing *Zelda 64*, *Dragon Quest VII*, and *Final Fantasy VII* all before year's end. *Final Fantasy* producer Hironobu Sakaguchi said that he "...can't say whether or not *Final Fantasy VII* will be released this year." And despite Nintendo President Yamauchi's assurances that *Dragon Quest VII* would be coming soon for the Nintendo-64, *Dragon Quest* designer Yuji Horii wasn't so sure.

"Although [Yamauchi] said that a new *Dragon Quest* will be released in a year and a half, I can't say for sure that this will be [*Dragon Quest VII*]. We're thinking of making a *Gaiden* type game for the Nintendo 64." (Meaning a side story to the *Dragon Quest* series, not a real sequel.)

Shigeru Miyamoto is busy producing just about everything Nintendo's making, including *Super Mario 64*, *Super Mario Kart R. Wave Race 64*, and *Star Fox 64*, and overseeing *Pilot Wings 64* and *Buggy Boogie*. He's also at work on a new Nintendo 64 2-D game (finally!). He couldn't say the title, but hinted that it would be a *Mario* spin-off title, like *Yoshi's Island* or *Donkey Kong Country*. He's also producing three Gameboy games, (*Virtual Lake*, a fishing game, a second *Picross* game, and *Pocket Monster*) and some unnamed Virtual Boy games.

In addition to working on *Zelda* for the Bulky Drive (called the "64DD" in Japan), he's also making a *Mario Paint* type game. With 20 writable megabytes on each disk, there definitely won't be any lack of space to save your games.

WORLDWIDE SALES OF PLAYSTATION OVER 3 MILLION SAYS SONY

Foster City, Ca. - Sony announced that worldwide sales of the PlayStation have exceeded 3.3 million. Of that total, 2 million were in Japan, 800,000 in North America, and 600,000 in Europe. PlayStation software sales have been at a ratio of 5 games per unit sold. According to Martin Homlish,

president of SCEA, "In fact, we are outselling competitive next-generation hardware systems at retail by a minimum of five to one, making the PlayStation game console the undisputed leader among next-generation systems."

SEGA REPORTS DOLLAR SHARE OF US VIDEO GAME MARKET

Redwood City, Ca - For the third consecutive year, Sega leads the North American Videogame Market in overall dollar share, capturing 43% of the market. Nintendo is second with 42%, then Sony with 13%, and 3DO with 2%. In 1995 Sega sold 900,000 Game Gear systems, 2 million Genesis systems, and over 3 million Saturn systems world wide. In November and December, Sega outsold Sony by over a 3 to 1 margin.

E3 ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

Los Angeles - The complete Electronic Entertainment Expo conference program and exhibitor list is now available online at

<http://www.mha.com/e3/>. Information on everything you need to know from conference session descriptions, to keynote speakers and special events will be available. Exhibitors with home pages on the Internet can even create links to and from the site so people can easily obtain more information. The Expo will be held May 16-18, 1996 at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

NINTENDO CELEBRATES MARIO'S 10th BIRTHDAY



Mario, the world's most recognizable video game character and most famous Italian plumber from Brooklyn, officially celebrates his 10th birthday this month. Nintendo released its flagship character nationwide in January 1986 with *Super Mario Brothers* for the Nintendo Entertainment System. Since then, Mario has appeared in more than 20 different video games that have sold more than 120 million cartridges worldwide to date. Other Mario highlights

include:

- * *Super Mario Bros. 3* for the NES sold more copies than any other video game in history, seven million in the U.S. and four million in Japan. If it were a record album it would have gone platinum 11 times!

- * Mario is recognized by more American children than Mickey Mouse.

- * Collectively, people have spent over 500,000 hours playing Mario games.

EA SPORTS DELAYS 32-BIT PRODUCTS

San Mateo, CA - After completing final product reviews of 32-bit hockey and *Madden* PlayStation titles, EA Sports has decided to hold back the games to make some improvements. While they felt the games looked great, the gameplay did not meet with the high standards consumers have come to expect from any Electronic Arts game. A fall release date is now expected for these games.

NINTENDO M2 STUFF

On December 29th, Japan's leading business newspaper, the Yomiuri Shimbun, published a front page article stating that Sega and Matsushita had joined forces to release one 64-bit machine, based on the M2 architecture, to target Nintendo's Ultra 64. The article stunned the video game industry, especially, it seems, Sega themselves. "This is 100% not true," was Sega's reply, and the following day the Yomiuri Shimbun printed a small, one line retraction. No one knows what exactly happened there, but now the Sega/Matsushita team-up rumors are flying more than ever.

In more solid M2 news, M2 reps are apparently assuring retailers that their system will be available around June 1996, with systems being manufactured by Matsushita (under the Panasonic label), Sanyo, and... Sony? It's hard to believe, but what if...? The first generation of systems may actually be DVD compatible, which could virtually guarantee success for M2 manufacturers. DVD systems, which play the new direct video standard of movies on CD-like disks, have wide industry support, but DVD players aren't expected to

retail for below \$500 at their launch. If you can get 64-bit M2 hardware with DVD compatibility for the same price... well, who wouldn't?

There's still very little news from the M2 camp on specific titles, with the only definite title being *D2*. But there's plenty of info on that for *D's* fans. Issue 7 of Japan's Live! 3DO Magazine has the entire intro to *D2* (although in crapy 300 FMV), and issue 8 has some PhotoCD shots. If you beat the recently released *D's* Director's Cut and get the best ending (by getting all 4 of the scarab beetles) you'll be treated to a 3 minute preview of the game. The M2 info is starting to flow. Stay tuned...

LOCKHEED MARTIN 3-D GRAPHICS ACCELERATOR OFFERS REAL-TIME PC VISUAL SYSTEM PERFORMANCE



Bethesda, Maryland, March 20 - Lockheed Martin announced today it is entering the 3-D graphics PC market with a high-performance chip set based on real-time computer image generation technology that gives a combination of dynamic response and realism previously available only on dedicated graphics workstations and high end custom image generators. Key performance attributes of the new chip set include an embedded 100 MFLOPS geometry processor, pixel write rates of up to 33 million pixels per second, up to 750,000 polygons per second, line processing up to 1.5 million per second, and provides up to 192 color texture maps (128 x 128 mipmapped) in real-time. This performance eliminates the jerky visual movement found in graphics products that operate at less-than-real-time rates.

Director John Lenyo attributes much of the developmental success of the new commercial PC product to experience gained in the development of the Model 2 Computer Graphics System, now used in Sega's arcade games.



SQUARE MAKING PS GAMES! & MORE...

Numerous sources including a high-profile Japanese periodical have confirmed that Square, the role-playing giant, has obtained a license to create PlayStation software. Nintendo fans, don't worry... they're still creating SFC and N64 software. Further down on the scale of hard fact is that their first PS title will be a *Final Fantasy* game, due in December. We'll have more info on this subject as soon as possible.



▲ Dynamite Tracer



▲ Love is Balance

SQUARE UNVEILS FOUR NEW SATELLAVIEW-ONLY GAMES

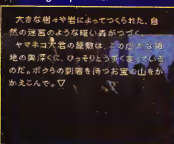
Aah! What's with Square!? First they refuse to bring their best Super Famicom games to the US, and now they release four games we'll literally never get to play... unless Nintendo releases the satellite games service Satellaview here. *Dynamite Tracer* is a driving RPG, *Love is Balance* is a lame-looking *Itadaki Street*-style love boardgame, *Radical Dreamers* is a Sound Novel-esque adventure game and *Treasure Conflix*, which looks to be the best of the bunch, is an RPG in which all the battles are Mode-7-shooting sequences.



▲ The Satellaview



▲ Treasure Conflix



▲ Radical Dreamers

- *Dragon Quest VI* sold 1.7 million copies the first day of its release. 400,000 more than *V* did on its first day. Speaking of *DQ*, Enix has announced a remake of *DOIII* for the SFC.
- Sega has announced that *Virtua Fighter Mini* for the Game Gear will be the first 8-meg GG title.
- Sega sold 700,000 copies of *VF2* in 3 days.
- All Nintendo-brand and some major third-party SFC games will drop in price from \$9,800+ to at least \$7,500, because N64 games will retail for \$9,800.



SQUARE'S TREASURE HUNTER G

Square's almost ready to go with yet another SFC RPG, *Treasure Hunter G*. The 24-meg G features rendered characters and lush, hand-drawn backgrounds. Join Red and his sister Blue on their search for the seven OOPARTS (Out-of-Place Artifacts) this April!



SNK TO MAKE PLAYSTATION GAMES

Joy of joys... SNK has signed up as a PlayStation third party! Their first three confirmed games are the ultra-popular arcade fighters *Samurai Shodown III*, *Real Bout Fatal Fury*, and *King of Fighters '95*. All of these games will be released in spring.



▲ King of Fighters '95



▲ Real Bout Fatal Fury



▲ Samurai Shodown III

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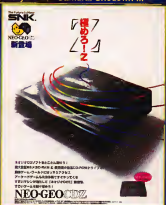
▲ Exciting new OS Extensions!



▲ The sleek CDZ

Finally... After SNK cancelled the American double-speed model, I never thought I'd be able to play Neo CD games in speedy-loading bliss. Now that the blazing CDZ's out, however, fast access time can be yours, not to mention these other exciting new features:

- The CDZ works with all existing Neo CD games
- Gone is the sickening juggling monkey, replaced with a television monitor!
- Games now load automatically, like a Saturn or PlayStation. The Neo CDZ is available now for about \$45,000.



▲ A Japanese print ad

ULTRA 64 EXPANSION PORTS REVEALED AT DEVELOPERS' CONFERENCE



▲ The Ultra 64 motherboard



▲ Power supply

Nintendo held an exclusive developers' conference for the Nintendo 64 on December 18th at which Nintendo second-in-command Hiroshi Imanishi, hardware guru Genyo Takeda, and gaming god Shigeru Miyamoto answered questions and displayed bare hardware, the MASSIVE AC adaptor, the memory expansion port and the up-'til-now secret 64DD port. The 64DD, or 64 Disk Drive, can hold 64 Megabytes of data, and 20 of these are rewritable by the user. Imanishi also stated that 14-15 Nintendo 64 titles would be out within a year and that all of them would be Nintendo brand games.



▲ The 64DD interface port



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